

Hafa Adai!

Over 200 attend 3-day autograph events at World Resort. **PAGE 2**
Christmas in the Marianas finale on Jan. 7. **PAGE 6**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

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Congress member, DOD officials among the expected inauguration dignitaries

» Construction of inauguration stage 100% complete by today

CNMI law enforcers rehearse yesterday the posting of colors for Monday's inauguration of governor-elect Arnold I. Palacios and lieutenant governor-elect David M. Apatang as workers finish building the stage in front of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

A member of the U.S. Congress and several officials from the U.S. Department of Defense will be among several dignitaries who will attend the inauguration of governor-elect Arnold I. Palacios and lieutenant governor-elect David M. Apatang this Monday.

Inauguration subcommittee vice chair Oscar M. Babauta disclosed yesterday that several off-island dignitaries have confirmed their intention to attend the ceremony.

Babauta said that several DOD officials, along with their respective staff, and a member of the U.S. Congress will be arriving.

See **CONGRESS** on **Page 4**



Babauta

Uptick in COVID cases seen

COVID-19 is still in the CNMI and we need to continue to be vigilant.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is monitoring an uptick in the number of COVID-19 cases in the CNMI, noting that there were four new hospitalizations related to COVID-19 infections over the holiday weekend.

A CHCC news release yesterday did not specify the number of new COVID-19 cases, aside from saying that a slight increase of COVID-19 cases has been identified in the wake of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

See **UPTICK** on **Page 4**

BOOST referred to OAG, OPA

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The joint committee of the House of Representatives that investigated the administration's Building Optimism, Opportunities and Stability Together program has referred the matter to the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Public Auditor, citing several alleged violations, including bribery and misconduct in public office.

During the 23rd House of Representatives' *sine die* session yesterday, joint committee chair Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota) gave

the committee's report, ultimately recommending the prosecution of those involved in the BOOST program in the belief that a number of CNMI laws were violated in the administration of the program.

"The committee has provided violations of laws that the OAG and the OPA can look into," Manglona reported.

In addition, the committee recommended that the incoming 23rd Legislature enact legislation that provides legislative oversight on how public funds are used in the future.

See **BOOST** on **Page 4**

GCEA's outlook for 2023: Together, We Can!

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By **JERRY TAN**
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

As we begin this new year, it is natural to look ahead and envision what kind of year 2023 will be, what changes it will usher in, and how we as residents will see progress for our home. Often people ask the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers

for thoughts on the future of the Marianas and how the next year will be different from the last. These conversations are more critical because we are still recovering from an unprecedented global pandemic, and there is no playbook to guide how recovery should look.

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INSIDE

BUSINESS

McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners welcome the New Year with a festive gathering.

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ASIA

PH President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has cited stable ties with China during a visit to Beijing.

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WORLD

President Joe Biden said the U.S. is considering sending Bradley Fighting Vehicles to Ukraine.

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Local

Over 200 attend 3-day SWR autograph events

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Over the course of three nights from Jan. 2 to 4, Saipan World Resort hosted Korean YouTubers for an autograph signing event with over 200 tourists and locals in attendance at the resort's Oasis lounge.

On the first night starting at 7pm, Ddua Dduji TV, and Yekong, and MyLynn TV YouTube personalities hit it off with over 100 people in attendance.

The last couple of nights saw another 100 people or so have a chance to interact with MyMom TV and Let's Play Yura, and Clever TV.

The YouTube personalities share a wide range of content that caters mostly to the youth and adolescents and have subscribers numbering in the millions. One channel, MyLynn TV has over 1 million subscribers, while Let's Play Yura has 1.89 million subscribers.

Along with getting their autographs, those in atten-

dance, which consisted of families with young children ages 2 and up, were treated to freebies, games, and raffle prizes throughout the one-hour events.

Children and families were seen enjoying the events and some were even brought up to the stage to introduce themselves before claiming their prizes.

"The turnout for the entire three-day period exceeded all of our expectations," said SWR local sales and marketing manager Michael Babauta.

"We are sincerely grateful to not only the in-house guests who enjoyed the autograph events, but everyone in the Saipan community who joined us. We would also like to thank the YouTubers who starred in the events, as they were extremely friendly and accommodating, welcoming everyone with open arms. The YouTubers also told us repeatedly how much they are enjoying Saipan, and we are

See OVER on Page 4

BMV will be closed on Monday

The Bureau of Motor Vehicle and the CNMI Department of Public Safety's Firearms and Records office will be closed on Monday, Jan. 9, 2023, due to inauguration festivities taking place at the Pedro P. Teno-río Multi-Purpose Center.

BMV services that will be closed include vehicle/vessel registration, driver's license renewal, driving test, and drivers permit.

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Firearms and Records office services that will be closed include issuing copies of criminal and accident reports, processing all fingerprints needed for employment and licensing, firearms application/identification cards, shooting gallery/dealers applications and licenses, registering of civilian-owned firearms, ammunition, and explosives in the CNMI and safekeeping of expired firearms and reissuing upon approval and/or completion of an updated firearms application.

Regular business hours will resume operation the following day on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023. (PR)



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS**SHEFA reminders**

The Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance program, or SHEFA, is reminding all interested applicants—new, ongoing, and returning beneficiaries—that the deadline to submit application and supporting documents is on Feb. 28, 2023.

Apply online at www.saipanshefa.com. Create your student profile and submit your application! Here you will have instant access to the status of your application once your application package is submitted.

You must have all the required documents ready to upload in order for your application submission to go through. (PR)

Warning out for rip currents

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through Saturday afternoon along east facing reefs of the Marianas.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Rip currents can sweep even the best

swimmers away from shore into deeper water.


The public is advised to stay out of the water along east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. (PR)

Rough seas for sailing until 6pm today

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6am today, Friday. This means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, northeast winds of around 20 knots and gusts of up to 25 knots mean that seas will briefly rise to 8 to 10 feet along coastal waters of the Marianas until 6am Friday.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. (PR)



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SPRING 2023 CLASS SCHEDULE

CLASS	DAYS	TIME	START	FINISH
HOTEL & RESTAURANT	M, W, F	3:15 - 5:15 PM	JANUARY 18	MAY 9
AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY	M, T, W, TH	9:00 - 11:30 AM	JANUARY 17	AUGUST 29
CULINARY ARTS: LEVEL 1	M, W	3:00 - 7:00 PM	JANUARY 18	MAY 9
CARPENTRY CORE + LEVEL 1	M, T, W, TH	5:00 - 7:30 PM	JANUARY 17	JULY 11
HVAC CORE + LEVEL 1	M, T, W, TH	2:00 - 4:30 PM	JANUARY 17	JUNE 6
ELECTRICAL CORE + LEVEL 1	M, T, W, TH	5:00 - 7:30 PM	JANUARY 17	JUNE 6
WELDING CORE + LEVEL 1	M, T, W, TH	5:00 - 7:30 PM	JANUARY 17	OCTOBER 3

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3rd Prize	CANON EOS Rebel T100 DSLR Camera	JOE SABLAN
4th Prize	SAMSUNG 10.4" Galaxy Tab A7 64GB	MMB MATURANA
5th Prize	LEVOIT Core 400S Smart True HEPA Air Purifier	RAYMOND MATHEWS
6th Prize	GOOGLE Nest Hub Max	JOHN GOURLEY
7th Prize	LENOVO SmartClock2 w/ Wireless Charge Dock	LYNN DUENAS
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DPS officials share inauguration day traffic control plan

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

To prevent being caught by congested traffic on Monday morning, the Department of Public Safety advises motorists to avoid Beach Road near the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe on Monday from 9am to 11am due to the inauguration of governor-elect Arnold I. Palacios and lieutenant governor-elect David M. Apatang.

It was also learned at a press conference in Susupe yesterday that four public parking areas have been designated for those who will attend the ceremony. These are at the Civic Center, Guma Hustisia, Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, and the Oleai Sports

Complex parking lot.

For those who will be parking at the OSC parking lot, there will be a turnaround shuttle bus that will be provided by the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority.

"They will be shuttling people from the [OSC] parking lot to the main event site," said Oscar M. Babauta, vice chairman for the Inauguration Subcommittee.

He said the purpose of the press conference is to allow DPS Highway Patrol commander Capt. Juan Mendiola and DPS Highway Traffic's Lt. Dan Smith to share with the public how they intend to handle traffic on the day of the inauguration.

"We want to let our general public know regarding traffic arrangement

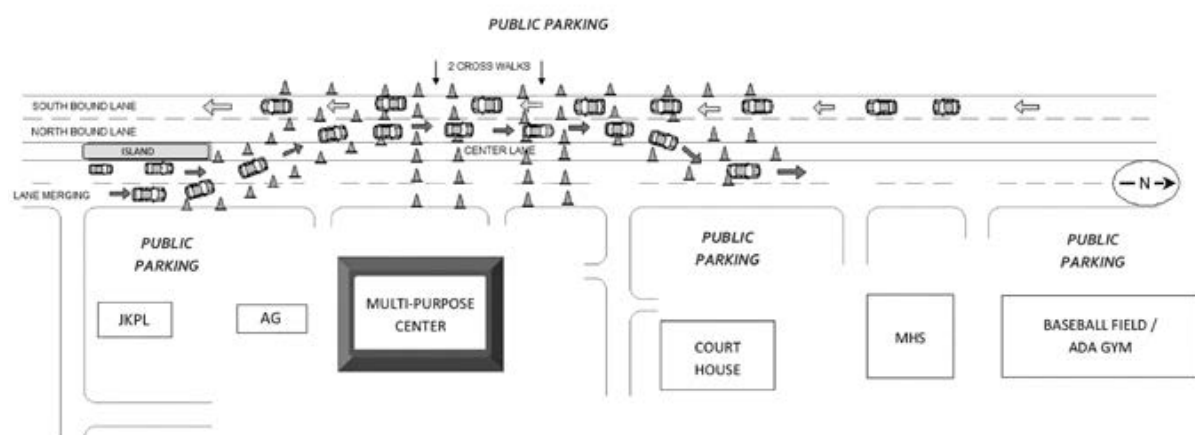
for this day so that we alleviate serious injury [and] serious property damage to our CNMI traveling public," he said.

Safety is not only their first and foremost concern, but also the noise that the traveling public would be creating from passing through the inauguration site, Babauta said.

"We need to allow dignitaries and both Palacios and Apatang to freely express their prepared statements or speeches that morning to our Commonwealth citizens and visiting individuals from both abroad and in the Commonwealth," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

2023 INAUGURATION TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN



CONGRESS

From Page 1

"That will be the highest level of federal officials that will be landing on our shores over the weekend," he said, without disclosing names.

As for the inauguration stage being built in front of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, Babauta said that construction will be 100% complete by today, Friday, but the stage is already complete structurally and finishing touches will just involve aesthetics. "It's just the aesthetic that we're working on now," he said.

Babauta said he saw the stage

Wednesday and that he is satisfied with the result. "We're working on the final product or toward end of which is the aesthetic in itself and decorations will probably will start tomorrow and Saturday," he said.

Babauta said the private sector is pitching in to help reduce the cost of the inauguration.

Although Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has allotted \$250,000 for inauguration activities, Babauta said that Palacios and Apatang are cognizant of public funds' expenditure and have clearly stated that they are probably keeping it at \$150,000 or less.

"We welcome the positive contributions of our private businesses. We

welcome those gestures of alleviating the painful financial conditions of this government that is facing right now," Babauta said.

He said this is taxpayers' money so whatever is not used would revert back to the general fund.

Babauta said lunch is free to the public.

He said Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro will administer the oath of office for Palacios, while Associate Justice John A. Manglona will administer the oath for Apatang.

Babauta said Palacios and Apatang will be sworn in using the English language so that everybody, including the off-island dignitaries, will understand.

UPTICK

From Page 1

The news release assured, though, that the safety of CNMI residents remains the top priority of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC and it encouraged residents to get as soon as possible early if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.

"If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, like fever, cough, shortness of breath, body aches, runny nose or sore throat, isolate yourself from others, get tested and treated early. The earlier the better to help prevent dangerous outcomes," said Dr. Lily Muldoon, medical director of Public Health and Emergency Department physician. "COVID-19 is still in the CNMI and we need to continue to be vigilant."

The CHCC news release states that, as the community is coming out

of the holiday season, CHCC urges everyone to practice simple steps to help minimize the risk of a post-holiday surge in COVID-19 infections and the understanding of risks to prevent increases in COVID-19 related hospitalizations in the CNMI.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention provides the following guidance on understanding your risks against COVID-19.

■ Factors that raise your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19

□ Age: Older adults (especially those ages 50 years and older, with risk increasing with older age) are more likely than younger people to get very sick if they get COVID-19. This means they are more likely to need hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe, or they could die.

□ Immunocompromised or weakened immune system: Hav-

ing a weakened immune system, also known as being immunocompromised, can make you more likely to get very sick if you get COVID-19. People who are immunocompromised, or who are taking medicines that weaken their immune system, may not be protected as well as others, even if they are up to date on their vaccines

□ Underlying health conditions: Certain underlying health conditions you have (for example, obesity or chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder) may affect your risk of becoming very sick if you get COVID-19. Often, the more health conditions you have, the higher your risk. Certain conditions increase your risk more than others. For example, severe heart disease increases your risk more than high blood pressure.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



LAST NIGHT OF CHRISTMAS IN THE MARIANAS

Saipan residents take pictures at the Marianas Visitors Authority's illumination display at Garapan Fishing Base on Saipan as part of the Christmas in the Marianas celebration this year. The event will conclude with a final night of live entertainment, food and drinks tomorrow, Jan. 7, from 5pm to 9pm. However, in celebration of Lunar New Year on Jan. 22, 2023, the light sculptures will remain on display until then.

MVA

BOOST

From Page 1

"As you know, there are several legislations pending with the Senate that the House had passed, including House Bill 22-33 to require legislative appropriations on [American Rescue Plan Act funds]. We are hoping that the next legislature can take this up," he said.

"While we are in our last session of the 22nd Legislature, the joint committee submits this report so that should we enter the 23rd Legislature, the committees can take this up and continue the work that the 22nd Legislature joint committee members have done. These were some of the recommendations and it is our hope that the 23rd Legislature will take this matter up," Manglona added.

Rep. Christina Sablan (D-Saipan) said she concurs with the committee's recommendations, noting that further investigative oversight and investigation into the BOOST program is needed and should continue into the 23rd Legislature. **See Page 9 for related story.**

"The joint committee has only begun to scratch the surface of the gross waste, abuse, and fraud that has occurred. There must be consequences and referrals must be made to the

OAG, OPA, and federal authorities for further investigation and prosecution. The next legislature should also take up measures to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds and the next administration should support these measures," she said.

"The BOOST program was a heist, public money was stolen, public money was squandered, public money was exploited for personal and political profit. Only very few out of thousands that applied were grossly enriched. This big money grab was made possible by the absolute lack of oversight and transparency," she added.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said that he just hopes that those who were involved in the gross mismanagement of BOOST funds are held accountable

Rep. Shiela Babauta (D-Saipan) said it's embarrassing that leaders of the CNMI would display such greed and self-interest when many are advocating for a "better" Marianas. "I highly support the recommendations of the committee and I urge all incoming and returning legislatures to continue the investigation on the BOOST program. I hope we learn from all of these and that we do not re-elect leaders who are filled with greed and self-interest," she said.

OVER

From Page 2

sure that the contents they produce will greatly benefit Saipan's tourism market."

According to Saipan World Resort chief executive officer Shi Hwang Kim, Saipan World Resort is planning to host more events for both locals and tourists throughout the year. "With this event being

such a success, we are planning more promotions and events in 2023, inviting YouTubers, influencers and TV programs to film content on Saipan and at our hotel. And we will arrange for more opportunities for our community to interact with them. We will continue our efforts to promote Saipan as a comprehensive travel destination to the Korean market, as well as to YouTube viewers and social media users."

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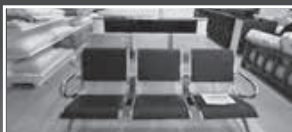
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Christmas in the Marianas finale on Jan. 7

Capping a monthlong celebration, the 18th Annual Christmas in the Marianas will conclude with a final night of live entertainment, food and drinks tomorrow, Jan. 7, from 5pm to 9pm at the Garapan Fishing Base on Saipan.

Entertainment for the evening is scheduled to include holiday music (5pm), Laly 4 Christmas Choir (5:30pm), Saipan Awaodori (6pm), Saipan Music & Dance Studio -SMADS (6:30pm), Petlas Marianas (7pm), Simiyan

Marianas (7:30pm), Flores Sinsar (8pm), awards for the booth decorating competition and Christmas Mini Village general public entries (8:30pm), and Cab Dancers (8:45pm).

The event is organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority, in partnership with PDM Promoters and Pacific Development Inc.

"Christmas in the Marianas has been annual signature of the MVA for nearly two decades, providing a festive



Chow Time serves patrons at the 18th Annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration on Dec. 3, 2022, at Garapan Fishing Base.

holiday celebration on Saturdays for both our visitors and our residents," said MVA acting managing director Judy C. Torres. "This year, due to Christmas Eve and New

Year's Eve both falling on a Saturday, we are extending our celebration one more night into January, which fits in nicely with the end of the Christmas season on Three

Kings Day celebrated by many in our community this Sunday. We invite everyone to come out and enjoy Saturday's festivities."

In celebration of Lunar New Year on Jan. 22, the illumination display at Garapan Fishing Base will remain up until Jan. 22.

For more information, contact MVA community projects specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or 664-3200/1 or visit www.mymarianas.com. (MVA)



Barbecue and more are served up by 10 food and drink vendors at the 18th Annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration at Garapan Fishing Base, Saipan.



The 18th Annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration returns for its final night and New Year's celebration tomorrow, Jan. 7, 2023, Garapan Fishing Base, from 5pm to 9pm.

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/ELC-EDE-005
EPIDEMIOLOGY AND LABORATORY CAPACITY (ELC) PROGRAM
— ENHANCING DETECTION EXPANSION (EDE)**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 16TH, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LABORATORY RENOVATION / IMPROVEMENT PROJECT"
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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW23-ITB NO.: 42300028**

SUBMISSION DATE: February 09, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

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COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **January 06, 2023** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 25, 2023**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **February 03, 2023** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

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/S/ MICHAEL A. BORJA
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ VIVIAN M. LIZAMA
ACTING DIRECTOR,
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**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR
ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES**

**TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
TWO EQUIPMENT STORAGE/RENTAL WAREHOUSE BUILDINGS
PROJECT NO. CPA-TA-001-23**

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the construction of two (2) equipment storage/rental warehouse buildings at the Tinian International Airport, Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Project No. CPA-TA-001-23.

The project is being funded by CPA and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, local time, Friday, January 27, 2023.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/S/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: January 4, 2023



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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

E pluribus unum: More and more are becoming American citizens by choice

In the fiscal year that ended this September, people from around the world chose us. At some 970,000 naturalizations, it was the third highest year on record for immigrants becoming American citizens.

This is a testament to the staying power of the American idea of a culture of cultures, the story that anyone from anywhere can still have as much of a say as all others. This is, to some extent, a myth, more aspirational than a true mirror, but within every myth there's a foundation of truth, and despite the imperfections this has kept being a country of immigrants.

These are a reason to celebrate, but they are not a reason to get complacent. Let's not lose sight of the fact that a big part of this uptick is because naturalizations were essentially shut down due to COVID, and also led by immigrants reacting to the most vitriolic anti-immigrant rhetoric and official action in a century.

Under former President Donald Trump, dissuading and disrespecting immigrants wasn't incidental, it was a deliberate strategy driven by people like Stephen Miller—the White House adviser who simply rejected the American identity of a truly pluralist society and yearned for a return to an imagined past of nativist glory.

Undoing his careful efforts will require more than just a change in rhetoric. The Biden administration must be commended for efforts to unwind the xenophobia, like reverting the citizenship test to a less onerous form and working to streamline it further, but this moment is an opportunity to do more than turn back the clock. Officials like U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Ur Jaddou and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas must work to clear the brush of bureaucratic obstacles that still lock people out, such as by reducing the use of redundant paperwork.

For its part, Congress has much to fix, including a broken family and employment visa system that keeps people waiting in interminable backlogs for permanent residency, the precursor to citizenship. Many of the best Americans will be the ones by choice.

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Give me old things for the new year. Bring back paper maps and pay phones

Unlike many of my boomer brethren, I do not yearn for the good old days.

Instead, I embrace change and shed no tears for the disappearance of manual typewriters, four-barrel carburetors or Meister Brau beer. But there have been some extinctions for which there was no rhyme or reason, and whose losses, I believe, have diminished us in some way.

So, in the spirit of optimism and hope for the new year, I advocate a comeback of the following worthy staples of American life for 2023.

Maps: How I loved poring over a road map spread out on the hood of a car! Not just for the adventure and satisfaction of plotting my own route—instead of outsourcing it to Google or Bing—but also for the deeper knowledge I might absorb about a region's geography and culture that I cannot get from a digital screen.

Maps in newspapers, I miss even more. A story about a bridge collapse in Moldova or a bumper crop of grapes in Azerbaijan has more meaning and relevance for the reader with an accompanying map, which used to be supplied in a box or in a side panel of the story, showing a country's position on the globe and who its neighbors are.

Such maps have been eliminated to save space and cut costs. But what more valuable filler is there for a newspaper's column inches than graphic orientation and enhancement of its content?

Gumball machines: There was never a more magical introduction to the grown-up world of pleasure and commerce than those colorful gumball machines. Grouches removed them from most drugstores, gas stations, supermarkets and diners for reasons of health, security and profit. But also because they did not appreciate how this miraculous dispenser gives a kid his first feeling of control, independence and immediate gratification: Put in a penny and turn the knob, and a reward pops into your hand.

Granted, 1950s-era gumballs rotted your teeth. But bring them back with dentists' recommended Orbit gum and restore an important fabric of American childhood.

Wing vent windows in cars: When it was not hot enough for the air conditioning but the air in the car was stale, those small triangular vent windows were the answer. The driver and front passenger could adjust them at just the right angle for cooling and for fresh air, even if it was raining.

Today's "automatic climate control" function in modern vehicles never gets those features quite right. And the claim that it can accommodate differing preferences for the driver and passenger is a technological myth.

Gas station attendants: Speaking again of cars, while we do

By **DAVID MCGRATH**

Chicago Tribune

David McGrath is an emeritus English professor at the College of DuPage and author of *South Siders*. He can be reached at mcgrathd@dupage.edu.



not have to leave their comfort and safety while completing a transaction at our bank, paying a toll, getting a COVID-19 shot or visiting a McDonald's or Starbucks, we still have to get out, regardless of how we are dressed, at a gas station.

Again, I evoke my childhood, when my six brothers and sisters and I were mesmerized, watching from the inside of our station wagon, as the attendant sprayed the windshield and wiped back and forth, back and forth, until we could clearly see his smile.

The difference today, if their jobs were resurrected, would likely be the presence of a tip jar next to the pump. But at least gas station attendants, unlike a lot of store clerks or baristas, would deserve them.

Pay phones: Am I the only one who dreads talking on the phone? I'd rather converse with someone in person or send them an email, or even a letter.

Which is why I held off on getting a cellphone for the longest time, compelled finally to purchase one when the last of the pay phones disappeared, and I had no other choice for emergencies.

So, yes, I'd like to see pay phones and their accompanying Superman booths returned. But they should include a digital screen and the capability to text, in which case I would gleefully fling my cellphone into the Chicago River. Just kidding: I'll recycle it at Best Buy.

Term papers: Students hate them. And teachers hate reading and grading them. Therefore, many schools have eliminated them, substituting blogs, oral reports, website creation, PowerPoint presentations and even podcasts.

But teaching students how to distinguish among logical arguments and fallacies, flimsy documents and reputable sources, facts versus "alternative facts," or truth and lies, all by applying Aristotelian principles of logic and Modern Language Association rules for research and documentation—all these skills are needed more today than ever before.

Your turn: What do you think should make a comeback: Milk trucks? Door-to-door Christmas carolers? "Seinfeld" (redux)? Float your proposal at the dinner table, or send me an email.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

There must be consequences for BOOST fiasco

Editor's Note: The following is the statement the author delivered on the floor during the 22nd House of Representatives' final session yesterday, Jan. 5, 2023, on the report of preliminary findings and recommendations by the joint committee (Ways and Means and Judiciary and Governmental Operations).

I concur wholeheartedly with the joint committee's recommendation that further legislative investigation into the BOOST program is needed, and should continue in the 23rd Legislature. Even with the thousands of pages of records collected, and the hours of testimony received in the final days before the end of our term in the 22nd Legislature, the joint committee has only begun to scratch the surface of the gross waste, abuse, and fraud that have occurred.

There *must* be consequences.

Referrals should be made to the attorney general, the public auditor, and federal authorities for further investigation and prosecution. The next legislature should take up measures to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the expenditures of public funds. And the next administration should support these measures.

The BOOST program was a heist. Public money was stolen. Public money was squandered. Public money was exploited for political and personal profit. Only a very few, out of the thousands that applied, were grossly enriched. They were obviously well-connected.

The insiders of the BOOST program want us to believe that award decisions were made based on the merit and uniqueness of the applications—even when large amounts of money and multiple awards flowed to the same individuals, the same families, the same business associates, the same political sup-

porters, the same bank administering the program and all its employees who applied.

"Everyone was privileged to apply," we were told by one of the review panelists. But clearly, only a few were privileged to get "BOOSTed."

This big money grab was made possible by the absolute lack of oversight and transparency. There were no rules, no process, no records of evaluations or votes or recusals, no rubrics, no guidelines, no restrictions. Meetings were held in secret—away from public view, without any notice or documentation. And the political motivations driving this program are impossible to ignore. There are signs of that throughout the records.

Here was a government program passing out cash, in the weeks before and during an election. The people reviewing applications and recommending awards were all political appointees of the governor and members of his reelection campaign. And the one person with final approving authority for all BOOST awards was the governor himself.

The BOOST program could have been amazing. It could have really helped a lot of businesses and nonprofits, people who struggled through the pandemic and just needed a lift. And let's be very clear that our efforts in launching this fact-finding and investigation into the BOOST program were not, and were never about, going after the legitimate small businesses and nonprofits that applied for these funds in good faith and with genuine needs. No one, really, can be blamed for applying for these funds.

But the people who should absolutely be held accountable are the BOOST officials who created a program with no rules, rubrics, or records, and grossly mismanaged and politicized the distribution of public funds. Multiple people had their hands in this fiasco. Ultimately, however, the buck stops with

By **TINA SABLAN**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rep. Christina "Tina" Sablan is a member of the House of Representatives in the 22nd Legislature.



the soon-to-be-former governor Ralph Torres himself, who had the final say for all the BOOST awards, and was and has been the sole expenditure authority for these funds.

Gov. Torres has staunchly maintained that only he should have had a say over all the federal funds that have been awarded to the Commonwealth. BOOST was a \$17-million debacle. But that's \$17 million out of the more than \$2 billion the Commonwealth has received in typhoon disaster and pandemic recovery funds. The brazenness and negligence of public officials involved in BOOST should make us all wonder: What other improprieties have been committed that we don't yet know about? What other money grabs have occurred?

If there is one lesson that has been amply demonstrated by this whole mess, it is what we in the House leadership have been saying this entire term: one person should not have such unchecked power over the public purse. That's how precious resources get wasted. That's how corruption begins.

I urge the next legislature, and the next governor, to take all necessary steps to change the culture of fiscal recklessness that has prevailed in our government, to one of real checks and balances, transparency, accountability, and prudence in the expenditures of public funds.

Father, friend and fisher man

I must admit that this stage of my life—the nostalgic, introspective and overly-sentimental stage—can be a bit annoying (or rather emotionally exhausting) at times. I suspect, particularly for those who don't know me (though I can't rule out even those who know me well), that I might come across as patronizing or didactic, if not pretentious and boring, with my over-sharing through a general love of the written word, but it is what it is—"I yam what I yam, and that's all what I yam" (Popeye, 1933). My behavior reflects my basic nature.

Prone to overthinking (from as early as I can remember), my mind is frighteningly susceptible to obsessive-compulsive thought and self-destructive action, but mostly thought. Imagine if you will a repeat-button getting stuck and automatically replaying a particular song (or more aptly, a particular video) and needing either to bang on it or let it run its course and play out enough times to loosen. That's my compulsion and whether it's a negative or positive thought determines the manner in which I function. To be clear, I don't have a mental-health diagnosis as such, have avoided psychological/psychiatric services like the plague and there again but for the grace of God go I "do not go gentle in that good night" (Dylan Thomas). More often than not, I self-medicate to mitigate and, if I'm being completely honest, sometimes to perpetuate the cycles—I'm either running away from or running to the windmills in my mind.

A quick plug (at the thought of running): the trifecta of exercise, healthy diet, and proper rest collectively render a more satisfying, calming and lasting effect than medicine of any kind. At fifty-plus years old now, it is something of an understatement to say that I have been through the gauntlet of non-prescribed, reckless alternatives and am intimately aware of the false promises therein. Also as a former athlete (of sorts), I can speak with some authority on the euphoria that comes with a rigorous, physical workout. Of course,

endorphins just appear out of thin air instantly with "medicine," whereas the more natural alternative requires an honest sweat and investment of time. It's no secret which route I've chosen to take in recent times though it is a New Year... fingers crossed. (*Note to reader: Please resist any urge to assume this is some kind of cry for help—it isn't—though I can't believe these are the words coming out of my mind).

If ever there are recurrent themes in my lifetime of neurotic thinking, they (broadly) are those of life, death and, of course, love. Put another way, I have spent a lifetime subconsciously and otherwise trying to reconcile (or rather obsessing over) the paradoxical yet harmonious nature of this holy trinity. Think about it: In the name of Life (the Father), Death (Son) and Love (the Holy Spirit).

There is perhaps nothing more life-affirming than the wonder of having children ("The sons and daughters of life's longing for itself"—Kahlil Gibran). It took me having kids of my own to understand (or rather empathize) with my Mortlockese grandparents who regularly bemoaned the phenomenon of their children and grandchildren leaving our home island in pursuit of whatever it was we sought (usually school or work, although plenty of us were known to stow away on ships for basic adventure, often for love—true stories for a future article perhaps). In their own words, "If you leave, who will carry my coffin when I die?" I suppose being buried in the absence of their own offspring was in their mind a fate worse than death itself to necessitate the constant reminders to even the youngest among us. The islanders I grew up with up tended to be very blunt and matter-of-fact in their approach to life, death, and dying. Coincidentally, I was away during the passing of my grandmother, but my grandfather died in his sleep a mere five feet from where I also slept—I had the honor (as a teenager) of being able (along with a few of his other grandchildren) to personally lift him into his plywood coffin, hammer the nails in to seal the cover and lower him into the ground for his final rest-

MY GLASS CUP

By **JIM RAYPHAND**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jim Rayphand is a former executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. and recently ventured into a startup fishing business.



ing place.

I have mixed feelings as to how much or how little to traumatize my own children with reminders about the fleeting nature of life. On the one hand they shouldn't be made to live a life in fear of death and on the other they should be keenly aware that our time here is limited—seize the day! A close friend of mine thinks it's too bleak to continually state the obvious—"that's too much pressure," she says. Maybe she's right or maybe she's wrong or maybe she's neither right nor wrong?

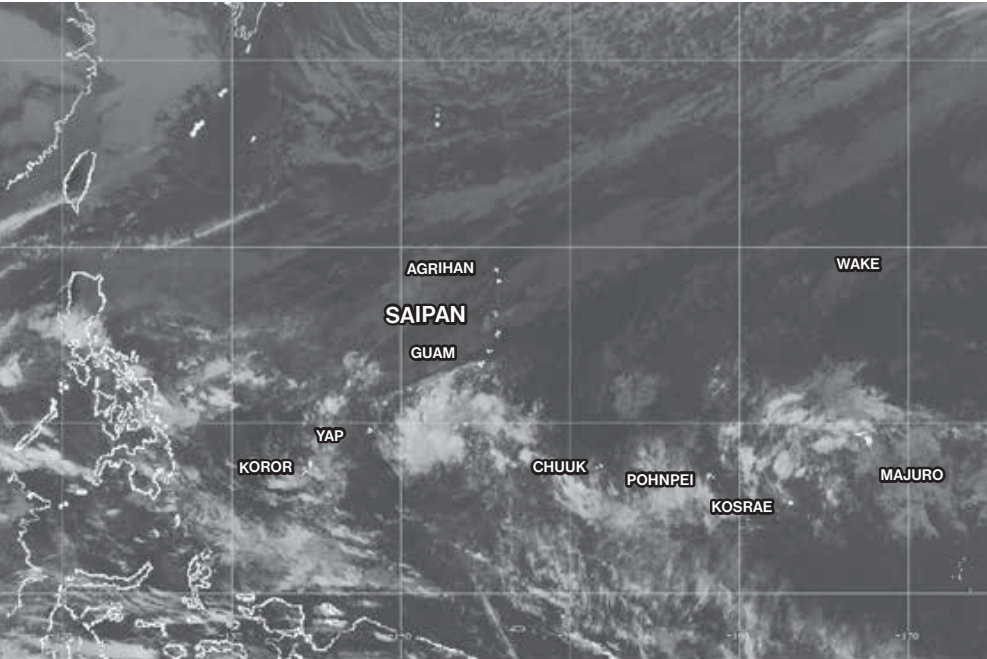
The vast and yet fine line between life and death is riddled with more questions than answers, but what is absolutely clear is that the only sustainable link between the two is love, a binding force beyond space and time. In my life, I can say without hesitation that I know fatherly love—agape in its most true form, unconditional/selfless—and I've known love in friendship (platonic or otherwise), conditional for sure, but enduring even after death.

The mystery for me is the love of God—God does work in mysterious ways. Perhaps it's no coincidence I'm to drawn to be a fisherman by trade as a simple reminder and exercise in faith to "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" (Luke 5:4).

I am no fisher of men and barely a fisherman at all, but at my end in remembrance, may the epitaph read: Here lies a Simple Man—Father, Friend and Fisher Man.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny,		A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny		Showers likely. Cloudy		A chance of showers. Partly sunny	
86°	77°	86°	77°	85°	77°	86°	78°	85°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:31 AM, THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar imagery showed showers north of Tinian and Saipan this morning. Showers will increase during the day.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	81° / 75°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	87° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	82° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Saturday	6:44 AM	6:01 PM
Sunday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Monday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	5:08 AM	4:29 PM
Friday	-	6:01 AM	5:20 PM
Saturday	-	6:52 AM	6:13 PM
Sunday	-	7:40 AM	7:05 PM
Monday	-	8:24 AM	7:56 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Rain/Wind	71° / 67°	
Beijing	Sunny	47° / 22°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	71° / 60°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	79° / 69°	
London	Showers	52° / 50°	
Los Angeles	Rain	60° / 45°	
Manila	Rain	82° / 76°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	79° / 55°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	81° / 72°	
New York	Cloudy	55° / 45°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	49° / 39°	
Paris	Cloudy	55° / 45°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	51° / 40°	
Rome	Showers	60° / 46°	
Salem	Sunny	64° / 36°	
San Francisco	Rain	57° / 49°	
Seoul	Showers	42° / 31°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	50° / 35°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	61° / 42°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:25 AM	Low Tide	-0.50	
8:48 AM	High Tide	1.59	
1:58 PM	Low Tide	1.11	
6:23 PM	High Tide	1.57	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3, 6 via Incheon	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
				OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)							

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS					
INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022					
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)	7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.		10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.	
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)	4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.		9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.	
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.		2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.	
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.		12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.	
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.		6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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GCEA's outlook for 2023: Together, We Can!

As we begin this new year, it is natural to look ahead and envision what kind of year 2023 will be, what changes it will usher in, and how we as residents will see progress for our home. Often people ask the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers for thoughts on the future of the Marianas and how the next year will be different from the last. These conversations are more critical because we are still recovering from an unprecedented global pandemic, and there is no playbook to guide how recovery should look.

After years of uncertainty over whether our families will be safe, whether assistance will arrive, or whether the economy that we rely upon for our livelihoods will return, we all have been focused on the question of what will come next. I have found that through it all, the answers to these questions come not from a crystal ball, but from the things we all have within our islands and within ourselves.

Through our collective efforts from throughout the Marianas, we have pulled together the skills, passions, and motivation we collectively possessed to make it through. I am proud of GCEA's efforts over these last few years to lend a hand in crafting where we are today. Just like many from across our community, our group of private sector leaders came together to provide our voices on decisions related to the resumption of commercial activity, the restart of the tourism industry, and using this time to attempt a transformation of our public sites.

Community organizations did their part as well. Through the launching of the Public Private Partnership initiative and programs like Marianas Village, Business and School Pride, our community and our youth have recaptured ownership over our future. I do not doubt that 2023 will be strengthened by this same commitment to our islands that was within us already. As we look at what the next year in the great story of the Marianas will bring, I feel it's important to review ourselves today as the best measurement for the reaches we can achieve ahead.

This year will mark the strength of our democracy, with the highly anticipated inauguration of governor-elect Arnold I. Palacios and lieutenant governor-elect David M. Apatang. On behalf of GCEA, we celebrate and congratulate Gov. Palacios on his successful campaign to lead our islands through this new chapter

in our history and know that his leadership built upon years of public service and compassion for our people will provide the foundation for renewed prosperity in the years ahead. This leadership will be facing some of the most significant challenges our islands have faced. Some are familiar—we have not reached pre-pandemic levels of tourism arrivals, many businesses still struggle to adjust to the impacts of the pandemic, and many individuals still struggle to resume employment and income as a result. However, GCEA and the wider community remain committed to our unified pursuit of recovery, and success in tackling these challenges is at our doorstep.

There are new challenges with the eventual phasing out of federal assistance in 2023 and the need to see true diversity in our economy to assist the Marianas in better managing global crises. Again, in meeting these new challenges of our day, we must recognize the tools we already possess. Our economy, while still working its way toward recovery, has seen a revitalization in entrepreneurship and the wealth of ideas and skills that individuals are willing to devote within the private sector to create memorable experiences for our visitors and support economic activity. We only need to fan the flames of these passions as they have the motivation and willingness to make success work here at home. We have the foundations for business retention and diversification in the newly created Commonwealth Economic Development Authority, which has within it the tools necessary to chart our path toward even greater levels of growth and prosperity across existing and new industries.

And through it all, Gov. Palacios and Lt. Gov. Apatang will be leading a Marianas full of individuals and organizations who have dedicated their time and efforts to the single cause of taking pride in these islands we call home. It has been an incredible honor to have worked alongside the 103 organizations that have signed on to five-year agreements to improve and maintain 123 sites across Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. They continue their work weekly to beautify our islands for residents and visitors alike. Even further, this year will see the expansion of these efforts to our schools and businesses. They have learned firsthand the benefits of taking ownership in upgrading, revitalizing, and improving life at the village level.

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By **JERRY TAN**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jerry Tan is a recognized entrepreneur, employer, and passionate advocate for volunteerism and giving back to the community. He serves as the GCEA's co-chairman, an advisory council to the governor. The GCEA's mission is to improve the quality of life in the Marianas for all residents.

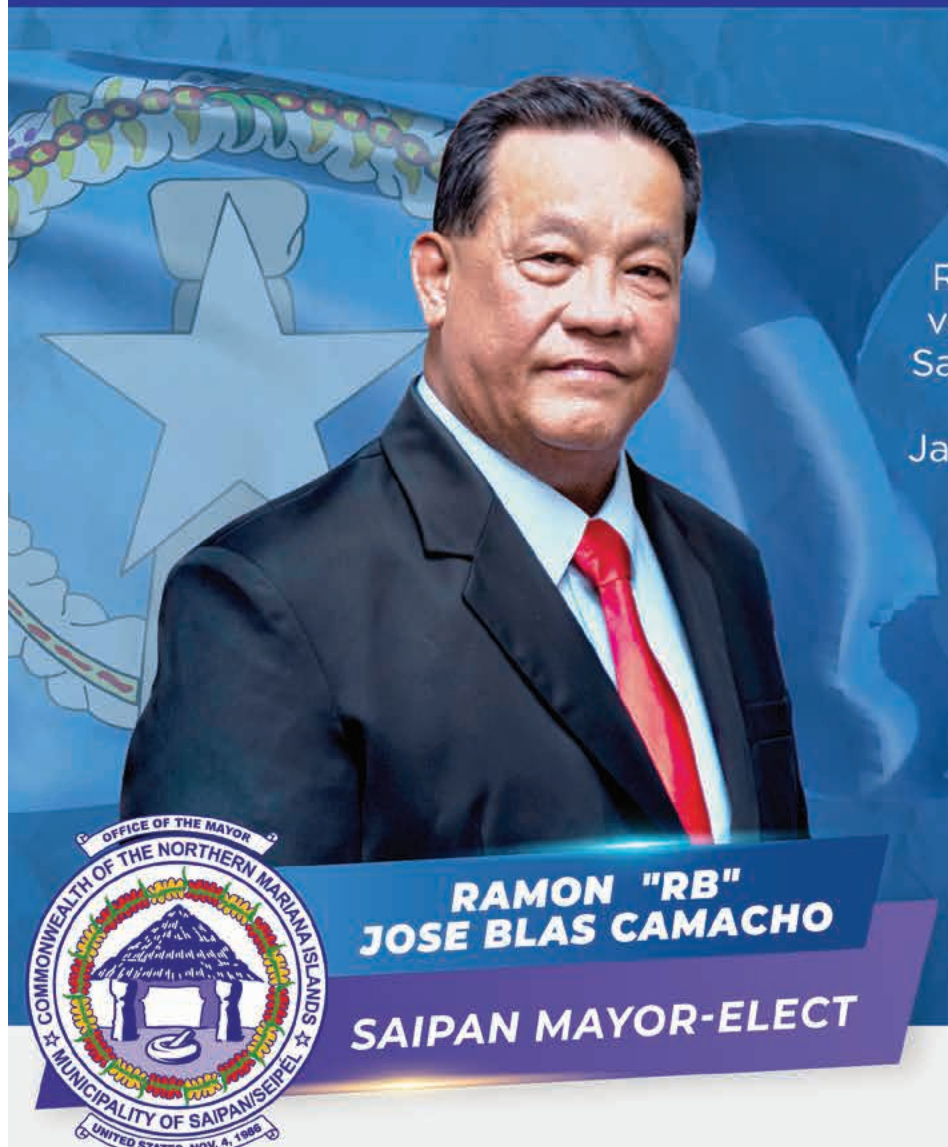


As we enter into this year of new possibilities and hope for the Marianas, we can take strength in knowing that whatever the year has in store for us, we have the talent, motivation, and passion for these islands that will see us reach even greater heights. This is the lesson of these past years: whatever comes our way, we can overcome the challenges through individuals, community, and democracy that remain stronger than ever.

There is much work to do. We will build upon the recent successes within the tourism sector through the TRIP program and air service options like those provided by United Airlines' direct service from Japan and Marianas Southern Airways' multi-island services to Tinian, Rota, and Guam. We will pursue diversification through CEDA and the evolving interest in the region from American investors seeking growth in a post-pandemic world. We will see new ideas and solutions come forward to recognize the unique labor challenges faced by the Marianas' economy. And we will make progress toward GCEA's two longstanding missions of developing the Marianas to become a world-class destination and improving the standard of living for residents on all islands. We can accomplish these things because I believe we have proven that GCEA's motto is the guidance for the years ahead that truly, Together, We Can.

For more information about the GCEA's programs, visit the Council's website at cnmieconomy.com, engage with them on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON INAUGURATION FOR RAMON "RB" JOSE BLAS CAMACHO, SAIPAN MAYOR-ELECT



The Committee on Inauguration for Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho, Saipan Mayor-elect, is very pleased to extend this invitation to the residents of Saipan to the Swearing-In Ceremony of Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho, Saipan Mayor-elect, to be held on January 9, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. at the CTC building, in Oleai.

Inaugural ceremonies will start at 8:30 a.m. and conclude no later than 9:30 a.m.

The Swearing-In Ceremony can be viewed live via live stream by logging in to <https://www.facebook.com/SaipanMayorOffice/>

Please join Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho, Saipan Mayor-elect, on this very special occasion.

/s/ Committee on Inauguration for Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho, Saipan Mayor-elect

UOG OFFERS JANUARY WORKSHOPS

Learn about raised-bed gardening and honey harvesting

The public is invited to two backyard agriculture workshops this month hosted by the University of Guam College of Natural and Applied Sciences. Both take place on Saturday, Jan. 21, at the Yigo Research & Education Center/Triton Farm, and partici-



Plants grow in a raised-bed garden. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

pants must register in advance to attend.

Raised-bed gardening workshop

- Time: 9am – noon
- Date: Saturday, Jan. 21
- Location: UOG Yigo Research & Education Center/Triton Farm
- Cost: \$5
- To register: Contact Phoebe Wall at (671) 735-2080 or pwall@triton.uog.edu.

Participants will learn the reasons for growing plants in raised-bed gardens as well as what vegetables and herbs to grow and when and how to plant them. Bring a hat and/or sunscreen.

Honey harvesting workshop

- Time: 1pm – 4pm
- Date: Saturday, Jan. 21
- Location: UOG Yigo Research & Education Center/Triton Farm
- Cost: Free
- To register: Contact Rita Barcinas at barcinasr8861@triton.uog.edu.

Participants will learn to identify when honey in a hive is ready for harvest and observe different methods of extracting the honey from the comb: by hand, using a press, or with a centrifuge. They will also learn about the byproducts of each method and how

they are used.

Stress survey for agricultural workers extended

Additionally, the university’s Farmer Focus project has extended the deadline for its Western Region Agricultural Workers Stress Survey and invites all part-time, full-time, and family agricultural workers in Guam to participate. Responses are anonymous and will inform efforts to create community programs to help farmers with stress

management. The survey for Guam is open until Tuesday, Jan. 31 at <https://url.uog.edu/agsurvey> All participants may opt to be entered to win a \$50 online gift card. For more information, contact Elvira Gisog at (671) 735-2062 or gisoge@triton.uog.edu. Residents can stay informed of public workshops hosted by UOG Cooperative Extension & Outreach by subscribing to the email list at <https://url.uog.edu/extension-subscribe>. (UOG)



Guam beekeeper Mike Aguon shows the honeycomb from his hive. Aguon was one of 20 new beekeepers on island in 2022 under the grant-funded Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development program at the University of Guam. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-23-011

LOWER MIHA SEWER LINE REPLACEMENT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Lower Miha Sewer Line Replacement in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of but not limited to the installation of gravity sewer main, new sewer manholes, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the abandonment of existing sewerline, removal and disposal of existing sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on January 24, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-IFB-23-011, Lower Miha Sewer Line Replacement”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 7, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 27, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email at dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO

Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN

Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-23-009

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF POWER DISTRIBUTION ANNUAL MATERIALS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified vendors for the Supply and Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials for Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. CUC may award a contract to more than one firm for the materials, based on bids for “Commodity Groups”.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-IFB-23-009, Supply & Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials, Saipan, CNMI”** to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 19, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time, Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. An electronic copy of the entire submission is also required to be sent via email to CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the bidder, awarded a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 29, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, CUC Senior Purchasing Technician via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org; Joseph Crisostomo, CUC Power Division Purchasing Technician via email joseph.crisostomo@cucgov.org and Alfred Palattao, Jr., CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO

Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN

Purchasing Administrator

Business

McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners host New Year's party

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners Jose "Joe" Ayuyu and Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu once again welcomed the New Year with a festive gathering of family, friends, and business associates at their Papago home last Jan. 1.

The New Year's party had everything—entertainment from local artist Marvin Deleon Guerrero, a nice buffet spread, and a grand fireworks display that rivaled the ones set off by the island's leading hotels.

The couple's son, Joe Ayuyu Jr., started the evening's activities by welcoming everyone who graced the New Year's party.

"Those who traveled far and many miles away thank you for being here to share this first day together with us and our loved ones and friends... We hope everyone had a great 2022 and we look forward to spending 2023 with all of you guys," he said before asking everyone to raise their glasses for a Happy New Year toast.

Marcia also seconded her son when she welcomed everyone to the event, which they've been hosting for the past 20 or so years.

"The whole year 2022 went by so fast and we're looking forward to spending time with you again at the end of 2023. Thank you so much for being here tonight as it means a lot to me and my family."



MARK RABAGO

The New Year's party of McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners Jose "Joe" and Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu had a grand fireworks display that could rival most hotels on the island.



MARK RABAGO

McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners Jose "Joe" and Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu and their children welcome their guests at the New Year's party last Jan.

The Ayuyu matriarch went on to say that 2022 was truly a blessed year for the local franchise holder of the McDonald's fast food restaurant in the Marianas.

The reopening of the newly

refurbished and modernized McDonald's Middle Road store was one of the highlights of 2022 as far as the company was concerned.

The Chalan Kiya location's \$2-million renovation hap-

pened in phases. The first part involved giving the lobby a more modern look and installation of self-serve kiosks and was completed last Jan. 8.

The second phase was the construction of the two-lane drive-thru and upgrading the outdoor digital menu board, while the last phase called for bringing in new equipment for the kitchen, training the staff on the new system, and the return of the mobile order pay.

On a more socio-civic side, Ayuyu established the Jose and Ruri Ayuyu Foundation in 2022 and hosted yet another successful 2nd Annual McDonald's Golf Classic with a sold-out field of 144 participants.

"We also now have three grandkids as well as celebrating other [McDonald's] stores reno-

vating in Guam," added Marcia.

As for 2023, the McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners are already looking forward to the

30th anniversary of the aforementioned Middle Road store and Marcia's very own birthday in February.



MARK RABAGO

Local artist Marvin Deleon Guerrero provided the evening's entertainment.

Amazon, Salesforce jettison jobs in latest technology worker purge

E-commerce giant Amazon and business software maker Salesforce are the latest U.S. technology companies to announce major job cuts as they prune payrolls that rapidly expanded during the pandemic lockdown.

Amazon said Wednesday that it will be cutting about 18,000 positions. It's the largest set of layoffs in the Seattle-based company's history, although just a fraction of its 1.5 million global workforce.

"Amazon has weathered uncertain and difficult economies in the past, and we will continue to do so," CEO Andy Jassy said in a note to employees that the company made public. "These changes will help us pursue our long-term opportunities with a stronger

cost structure."

He said the layoffs will mostly impact the company's brick-and-mortar stores, which include Amazon Fresh and Amazon Go, and its PXT organizations, which handle human resources and other functions.

Salesforce, meanwhile, said it is laying off about 8,000 employees, or 10% of its workforce.

The cuts announced Wednesday are by far the largest in the 23-year history of a San Francisco company founded by former Oracle executive Marc Benioff. Benioff pioneered the method of leasing software services to internet-connected devices — a concept now known as "cloud computing."

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 -
Fax. (670) 234-9021 | Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor

This ad is paid for by NMHC funds

Arnold I. Palacios
Lt. Governor

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is the agency authorized to allocate Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the CNMI. The United States 1986 Tax Reform Act created the federal low-income housing tax credit program under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) to assist with the development of low-income rental housing by providing qualified owners with credit to offset their federal tax obligations. The LIHTC is available to owners/developers of qualifying buildings and projects that meet certain low-income occupancy and rent restrictions.

Section 42 of the Code provides that the CNMI prepare a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to determine housing priorities and to give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods. The QAP must incorporate selection criteria, which include project location, housing need characteristics, sponsor characteristics, tenant populations with special needs, and public housing authority waiting lists. The QAP (as in the previous QAP) includes the capital needs assessment, limiting developer fees, and income averaging.

NMHC will conduct a public hearing to solicit comments from the public on 01/20/23, 9:00 a.m., at NMHC's Main Office in Garapan, Saipan. Copies of the draft **2023-2024** Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) are also available at NMHC's Main Office in Garapan, Saipan and on our website at www.nmhc.gov.net.

Interested persons wishing to express their views on the QAP may do so either by attending the public hearing or by submitting comments to NMHC by 4:30 p.m. on 01/20/23. Further, individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

For more information on this program, please contact NMHC at 234-6866/7670/7689/9447.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:
ANTHONY MENDIOLA CAMACHO,
aka: "Tonnei."
Decedent.

Civil Action
No. 16-0094
ORDER SETTING
TIME TO HEAR CLAIMS
OF HEIRSHIP AND
DEADLINE FOR FILING
CLAIMS OF HEIRSHIP
Date: February 27, 2023
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Judge: Kenneth L.
Govendo

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Court in the above-captioned probate matter will hear all heirship claims from any interested parties/potential heirs to the Estate of Anthony Mendiola Camacho, aka "Tonnei" on **February 27, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.** at the Guma Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice, in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The deadline for filing a claim of heirship in the above-captioned probate matter is **February 26, 2023**. This notice shall be published three times in two newspapers of general circulation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SO ORDERED this 28th day of December 2022.

/s/
Kenneth L. Govendo, Associate Judge

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F-0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547 | FAX: (670) 234-9537
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DEELYN MANOSHI :
CAMACHO KEREMUS,
VINCENT ANTHONY
CAMACHO KEREMUS :
AND JOHN CHRISTIAN
CAMACHO KEREMUS,
Plaintiffs,

CIVIL ACTION
NO. 22-0085

BERNARD FRANCIS
KEREMUS and MSJ, LLC,
Defendants.

FIRST AMENDED SUMMONS
TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given you herewith, within twenty-one (21) days after service of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for your relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

/s/
Clerk of Court
Dated, this 22nd day of August, 2022.

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Nation

‘A disaster’: Speaker fight exposes GOP leadership vacuum

NEW YORK (AP)—With House Republicans riven by infighting, unable to coalesce around a pick for speaker, former President Donald Trump had an emphatic message for the new GOP majority.

“Do not turn a great triumph into a giant & embarrassing defeat,” Trump warned in all-caps on his social media platform Wednesday morning, urging the 20 or so insurgents to “close the deal” and back Kevin McCarthy.

It didn’t help. Only one voter budged: a previous McCarthy backer who opted to vote “present” instead.

The stalemate is more than an embarrassment for McCarthy, who is now the first person in a century to muddle through multiple ballots — six so far — and appears no closer to clinching the job than when voting began. The revolt is raising alarms within the party as members warn they are sabotaging their new, narrow majority and alienating voters as they struggle to perform their most basic function: electing their own leader.

The episode also poses more profound questions about the party’s identity and future. It’s a fresh reminder of Trump’s wan-

ing influence inside the GOP —even among the most vocal supporters of his Make America Great Again political movement —as he again seeks the party’s presidential nomination, exposing a leadership vacuum with no obvious alternative to unite the party and guide it through practical governing responsibilities and political challenges.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich warned that the anti-McCarthy Republicans were “playing with fire.”

“This is the greatest danger we’ve had as a party since 1964,” Gingrich said in an interview, referring to the Republican National Convention that saw moderates facing off against conservative insurgents. The Republican base, he said, is “watching chaos in the House and they’re watching the potential for a Never-Trump and an Always-Trump collision that could be devastatingly divisive.”

The party’s allies in conservative media were equally distressed.

“This is a disaster for the Republicans,” Fox News host Steve Doocy said Wednesday on “Fox & Friends.” Sean Hannity said Tuesday night

that House Republicans “are now on the verge of becoming a total clown show if they’re not careful.”

On Tuesday, McCarthy failed to win the required majority on three ballots as a group of 20 Republican rebels insisted on a more conservative alternative. On Wednesday, the anti-McCarthy group ticked up to 21 through three more failed votes.

Until a speaker is chosen, the elected representatives to the House cannot be sworn in, leaving Congress’ lower chamber in a suspended state of dysfunction.

The extraordinary infighting rippled across the Republican ecosystem as the 2024 election cycle gets underway.

“What I’m hearing from grassroots Republicans, donors, candidates and even federal elected officials is that there’s a significant leadership vacuum on the Republican side,” said Harmeet Dhillon, a California attorney who is challenging Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel to lead the party’s organizing committee.

Dhillon declined to issue an endorsement in the speaker’s election, noting only that

“there’s a feeling that the old guard doesn’t get it.”

The chaos stood in sharp contrast with Democrats, who are largely united behind President Joe Biden heading into the new presidential election season.

ACROSS THE NATION

Hearing, document release likely in Idaho slayings case

BOISE, Idaho (AP)—The man accused in the November slayings of four University of Idaho students is back in Idaho, where he’s charged with four counts of first-degree murder and felony burglary, and could make his first court appearance as early as Thursday.

Bryan Kohberger’s return to the state also means sealed documents that could answer key questions in the closely watched case will soon be released publicly.

Kohberger, a 28-year-old doctoral student at Washington State University, was flown by Pennsylvania State Police to a small regional airport near the Idaho border and handed over to local authorities Wednesday evening. Uniformed law en-

forcement officers were waiting on the tarmac for the plane to land, and then escorted the handcuffed Kohberger to a caravan of five vehicles for the short drive from Washington across the Idaho border.

The public release of court documents could shed some light on Latah County Prosecutor Bill Thompson’s reasons for accusing Kohberger in the Nov. 13 stabbing deaths of Kaylee Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin and answer key questions about how authorities built a case against him.

8 found fatally shot in Utah home, including 5 children

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Eight family members, five of them children, were found dead from gunshot wounds in a southern Utah home Wednesday, according to authorities


who did not provide more details or a potential motive for the killings.

The victims were found when police did a welfare check at the residence, according to a statement by city officials in Enoch, a small town of about 8,000 people located 245 miles (394 kilometers) south of Salt Lake City.

Police said they did not detect any threat to the public.

Enoch City Manager Rob Dotson said the community was sent reeling by news of the eight bodies and that the deceased — all members of one family — were well known in the southern Utah town.

“Many of us have served with them in church, in the community and gone to school with these individuals,” Dotson said in a video statement Wednesday night.



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

CUC-RAESP-23-004

A&E Design Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System Preliminary Engineering Report

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System on Tinian and Rota. The services shall include preparation of the PER as per USDA RUS Bulletin 1780-2.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email to marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office via email after registration.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-RAESP-23-004, A&E Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System – Preliminary Engineering Report”**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m., (ChST) on January 18, 2023. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.


All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant’s preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 28, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email, nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org; Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Chief Engineer at email larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-041
REANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: January 4, 2023
Closing Date: January 18, 2023

POSITION TITLE: DEPARTMENT: LOCATION: ANNUAL SALARY: CONTRACT: POSITION(S):	Trades Assistant Rota Water Division Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, USA \$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt Not Contracted One (1)
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The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Resident Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Performing daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assisting plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples.
- Must be able to lift objects weighing at 40 lbs. or more.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing:

- Valid CNMI Driver’s License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Asia

Philippine leader cites stable ties in visit to Beijing

BEIJING (AP)—Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has cited stable ties with China during a visit to Beijing in which he has sought to downplay territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

After being hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, both nations are seeking to re-charge investments in bridges and other projects, along with tourism and agriculture.

Disputes linger however over islands and waters in the strategic South China Sea, which Beijing claims virtually in its entirety.

In a video address released by his office Wednesday, Marcos said the sides discussed “what we can do to move forward, to avoid possible mistakes, misunderstandings that could trigger a bigger problem than what we already have.”

Marcos said he made the case for Filipino fishermen who have been denied access to their traditional areas of operation by China’s navy and coast guard.

“The president promised that we would find a compromise and find a solution that will be beneficial so that our fishermen might be able to fish again in their natural fishing grounds,” Marcos said.

A joint statement issued Thursday said Xi and Marcos had an “in-depth and candid exchange of views on the situation in the South China Sea, emphasized that maritime issues do not comprise the sum-total of relations between the two countries and agreed to appropriately manage differences through peaceful



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Visiting Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., left, and Chinese President Xi Jinping listen to the national anthems of their countries on stage during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023.

means,” according to China’s official Xinhua News Agency.

“Both sides reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace and stability in the region and the freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea,” the statement added.

Accompanied by a large business delegation, Marcos presided at meetings Thursday seeking to finalize trade and investment deals. China accounts for 20% of the Philippines’ foreign trade and is also a major source of foreign direct investment.

China’s official Xinhua News Agency said that both

sides “agreed to handle maritime issues properly through friendly consultation” and resume talks on oil and gas exploration.

Xi named agriculture, infrastructure, energy and culture as four key areas of cooperation. He said that China is willing to assist in agriculture and rural development in the Philippines and in infrastructure and connectivity projects, Xinhua reported.

Marcos received a commitment from Xi to address the Philippines’ trade deficit with China, his office said. The two sides are finalizing rules for imports of fruits from the

Philippines, which Marcos said would start to balance the trade.

The Philippine leader said he also looked forward to the return of Chinese tourists once the COVID-19 situation in China settles. Last year, only about 9,500 Chinese visited the Philippines, down from about 1.6 million before the pandemic.

In comments to the head of China’s ceremonial legislature, Li Zhanshu, Marcos said the two countries “be able to face the challenges and the different shocks that now we are already beginning to feel and will be continue to feel in the

next few years.”

Beijing has ignored a 2016 ruling by a tribunal in The Hague brought by the Philippines that invalidated Beijing’s claims to the waterway.

China has since developed disputed reefs into artificial islands with airplane runways and other structures so they now resemble forward military bases.

Most recently, a Filipino

military commander reported that the Chinese coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris that Philippine navy personnel had retrieved in the South China Sea last month.

China denied the forcible seizure, saying the Filipino sailors willingly handed over the debris. Marcos did not say whether he had raised the issue in his meetings with Chinese leaders.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Beds run out at Beijing hospital as COVID brings more sick

BEIJING (AP)—Patients, most of them elderly, are lying on stretchers in hallways and taking oxygen while sitting in wheelchairs as COVID-19 surges in China’s capital Beijing.

The Chuiyangliu hospital in the city’s east was packed with newly arrived patients on Thursday. By midmorning beds had run out, even as ambulances continued to bring those in need.

Hard-pressed nurses and doctors rushed to take information and triage the most urgent cases.

The surge in severely ill people needing hospital care follows China abandonment of its most severe pandemic restrictions last month after nearly three years of lockdowns, travels bans and school closures that weighed heavily on the economy and prompted street protests not seen since the late 1980s.

It also comes as the the European Union on Wednesday “strongly encouraged” its member states to impose pre-departure COVID-19 testing of passengers from China.

Over the past week, EU nations have reacted with a variety of restrictions toward travelers from China, disregarding an earlier commitment to act in unity.

Italy — where the pandemic first exacted a heavy toll in Europe in early 2020 — was the first EU member to require coronavirus tests for airline passengers coming from China, but France and Spain quickly followed with their own measures. That followed the imposition by the U.S. of a requirement that all passengers from China show a negative test result obtained in the previous 48 hours before departure.

Islamic State claims Afghanistan airport checkpoint bombing

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a bombing near a checkpoint at the Afghan capital’s military airport that killed and wounded several people.

IS said in a statement late Tuesday that Sunday’s attack on the checkpoint in Kabul was carried out by the same member who took part in an assault on a hotel in the capital in mid-December.

The regional affiliate of the Islamic State group — known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province and a key rival of the Taliban — has increased its attacks in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover in 2021. Targets have included Taliban patrols and members of Afghanistan’s Shiite minority.

IS published a photo of the attacker identifying him as Abdul Jabbar, saying he withdrew safely from the attack on the hotel after he ran out of ammunition. It added he detonated his explosives-laden vest targeting the soldiers gathered at the checkpoint.

The military airport is around 200 meters (yards) from the civilian airport and close to the Interior Ministry, itself the site of a suicide bombing last October that killed at least four people.

Abdul Nafi Takor, a spokesman at the Taliban-run Interior Ministry, said the explosion left “several” people dead and wounded, without providing figures or further information. He said details of an investigation will be shared later.

Takor and Khalid Zadran, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, did not respond to requests on Wednesday asking for further comment.

The checkpoint — located on Airport Road, which leads to high-security neighborhoods housing government ministries, foreign embassies and the presidential palace — appeared damaged but intact.

Myanmar army leader touts election plan on Independence Day

BANGKOK (AP)—Myanmar’s ruling military leader pardoned over 7,000 prisoners, including some political detainees, and detailed plans for an election later this year during a ceremony Wednesday marking the 75th anniversary of independence from Britain.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing urged other nations and international organizations, as well as his country’s own people, to support “the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system,” a concept the ruling military has defined as its goal since it ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

The army’s takeover reversed nearly a decade of progress toward democracy after 50 years of military rule.

The plan for a general election is widely seen as an attempt to normalize the

military’s seizure of power through the ballot box and to deliver a result that ensures the generals retain control. The military will control the entire process and has spent the past two years enfeebling any credible opposition.

There was no sign the pardoning of 7,012 prisoners, along with a partial commutation of the sentences of other inmates not convicted of serious crimes, included Suu Kyi. She has been held virtually incommunicado by the military since it seized power.

The 77-year-old Suu Kyi is serving 33 years imprisonment after being convicted of a series of politically tinged prosecutions brought by the military. They include illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions, breaching the official secrets act, sedition, election fraud

and corruption.

Her supporters and independent analysts say the cases against her are an attempt to discredit her and legitimize the military’s seizure of power while keeping her from taking part in the election that the military has said would take place by August this year.

At Insein Prison in Yangon — Myanmar’s most notorious — relatives thronged the gates and celebrated as loved ones were driven out of the compound on buses.

Asked how he felt about his release, a former information officer for Suu Kyi’s political party, Htin Lin Oo, was restrained in his response. He was arrested on the morning of the army takeover and in February last year sentenced to three years in prison for incitement.

“What really matters is

whether it’s a real freedom or not. I want a real kind of freedom,” he said. “I don’t just want to be released from jail but I also want freedom for all of my life, all of my hopes, my family and all the new generations.”

The first real move toward elections could occur at the end of this month, when the latest six-month extension of a state of emergency declared by the military is completed.

“Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair elections will be held in line with the 2008 constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over state duties to the winning party in accordance with the democratic standards,” Min Aung Hlaing said in his speech in the capital, Naypyitaw, where he also presided over a large-scale parade.

World

Biden weighs sending Bradley Fighting Vehicles to Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden said Wednesday that the U.S. is considering sending Bradley Fighting Vehicles to help Ukraine combat Russia's on-going invasion.

Biden was asked during an exchange with reporters while traveling in Kentucky whether providing the tracked armored fighting vehicle to Ukraine was on the table. He responded "yes," without offering further comment.

With Russia's war on Ukraine now in its 11th month, Kyiv has been pressing the U.S. for tanks, longer-range missiles, armor and air defense systems. Intense fighting has continued in eastern Ukraine despite the onset of winter.

The Bradley is a medium armored combat vehicle that can serve as a troop carrier. It has tracks rather than wheels, but the vehicle is lighter and more agile than a tank. It can

carry about 10 personnel, or be configured instead to carry additional ammunition or communications equipment.

Bradleys are still used by the U.S. Army, although the military has been looking for a replacement for years.

The Pentagon has already provided Ukraine with more than 2,000 combat vehicles, including 477 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles and more than 1,200 Humvees.

Biden announced last month that the U.S. would for the first time send Ukraine a Patriot missile battery, the most advanced surface-to-air missile system the West has provided to help repel Russian aerial attacks.

The U.S. Congress last month approved nearly \$44.9 billion in military and economic aid for a war that has no end in sight.

The same day Biden acknowledged that he was weighing sending Brad-



American soldiers drive a Bradley fighting vehicle during a joint exercise with Syrian Democratic Forces at the countryside of Deir Ezzor in northeastern Syria, Dec. 8, 2021. AP

leys to Ukraine, France announced it would send French-made AMX-10 RC light tanks to Ukraine — the first tanks to be supplied by a Western European country. That announcement followed a phone call between French President Emmanuel Macron and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The French presidency didn't say how many tanks would be delivered and when. The NATO member has given Ukraine anti-tank and air defense missiles and rocket launchers.

Zelenskyy, who visited Washington last month, has made clear to the U.S. and Western allies that Ukraine needs more sophisticated weaponry.

"I assure you that Ukrainian soldiers can perfectly operate American tanks and planes for themselves," Zelenskyy said during an address to American lawmakers during the visit.

UN to hold emergency meeting on Israeli visit to holy site

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting Thursday at the request of the Palestinians and other Islamic and non-Islamic nations to protest the visit of an ultra-nationalist Israeli Cabinet minister to a flashpoint Jerusalem holy site and demand an end to Israeli extremist provocations and respect for the historic status quo at the site revered by Muslims and Jews.

Tuesday's visit by Israel's new National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a West Bank settler leader who draws inspiration from a racist rabbi, to the site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif, Arabic for the Noble Sanctuary, drew fierce condemnation from across the Muslim world, a strong rebuke from the United States, and fueled fears of unrest as Palestinian militant groups threatened to act in response.

The Palestinian U.N. ambassador, Riyad Mansour, told reporters Wednesday after meetings with Arab ambassadors, representatives of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the 120-member Nonaligned Movement and others that there is not only widespread condemnation of Ben-Gvir's visit but also of the broader "environment of extremism" surrounding the most extremist government in Israel's history.

He accused Israel of committing "aggression" not only

against Muslim holy sites including the Al Aqsa Mosque but against Christian sites including graveyards.

The site is the holiest site in Judaism, home to the ancient biblical temples. Today, it houses the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam. Since Israel captured the site in 1967, Jews have been allowed to visit but not pray there.

Describing the Temple Mount as "the most important place for the Jewish people," Ben-Gvir decried what he called "racist discrimination" against Jewish visits to the site.

With the Dome of the Rock, the Islamic shrine, in the background and waving his fingers at the camera, he said the visits would continue. As for threats from Gaza's Hamas militant group, Ben-Gvir, known for his anti-Arab rhetoric and provocative stunts, said in a video clip taken during the visit: "The Israeli government won't surrender to a murderous organization, to a vile terrorist organization."

Mansour, flanked by ambassadors from about 20 countries, said that at Thursday's emergency Security Council meeting, also supported by the United Arab Emirates, China, France and Malta, "we will not be satisfied with beautiful statements which will be uttered."

"We want them to be implemented in a concrete way," he said. "We want this behavior not to be repeated in Al Aqsa Mosque and Al-Haram Al-

Sharif, and we want a guarantee of honoring and respecting the historic status quo in deeds, not only in words."

Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Khaled Khiaire will brief the Security Council at Thursday's meeting,

U.N. spokesman Stepane Du-jarric said.

Jordan's U.N. Ambassador Mahmoud Hmoud said his country, whose ruler King Abdullah II is custodian of the Islamic and Christian holy sites, is "extremely concerned at the incursion" by minis-

ter Ben-Gvir and the Israeli government.

"This is an action of extremism that purports to create a new cycle of violence," he said. "The Security Council has to take its responsibility seriously and stop such attempts."

Hmoud said Israel has made a commitment to respect "the historic legal status quo" and its

obligations under international law, but unfortunately Ben-Gvir made an incursion into the Al-Aqsa Mosque in violation of Israel's legal obligations.

"There has to be a firm stand by the international community against this because it will happen again, and once it will happen again, a new cycle of violence will ensue," he warned.

WORLD BRIEFS

Iran lashes out at France over new Charlie Hebdo cartoons

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Iran summoned the French ambassador on Wednesday to condemn the publication of offensive caricatures of the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.

The magazine has a long history of publishing vulgar cartoons mocking Islamists, which critics say are deeply insulting to Muslims. Two French-born al-Qaida extremists attacked the newspaper's office in 2015, killing 12 cartoonists, and it has been the target of other attacks over the years.

Its latest issue features the winners of a recent cartoon contest in which entrants were asked to draw the most offensive caricatures of Khamenei, who has held Iran's highest office since 1989. The contest was billed as a show of support for anti-government pro-

tests rocking Iran.

One of the finalists depicts a turbaned cleric reaching for a hangman's noose as he drowns in blood, while another shows Khamenei clinging to a giant throne above the raised fists of protesters. Others depict more vulgar and sexually explicit scenes.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian vowed a "decisive and effective response" to the publication of the cartoons, which he said had insulted Iran's religious and political authorities.

The French government, while defending free speech, has rebuked the privately-owned magazine in the past for fanning tensions.

Palestinians say teen killed by army in West Bank clashes

JERUSALEM (AP)—A 16-year-old Palestinian was killed Thursday by Israeli fire during an arrest raid in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus on Thursday, the Palestinian

Health Ministry said.

It was the latest bloodshed in the region that has seen Israeli-Palestinian tensions surge for almost a year. An Israeli rights group said earlier this week that 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians since 2004, a period of intense violence that came during a Palestinian uprising.

Palestinian health officials said Amer Abu Zeitoun, 16, died after he was shot in the head by Israeli soldiers.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said Abu Zeitoun was shot during clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers during an army arrest raid. It was not immediately clear if Abu Zeitoun was taking part in the confrontations.

The Israeli army did not immediately comment on the incident.

The Israeli military has been conducting near-daily raids into Palestinian cities and towns since a spate of Palestinian attacks against

Israelis killed 19 last spring.

Nearly 150 Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank and east Jerusalem last year, according to B'Tselem's figures, making 2022 the deadliest since 2004, when 197 Palestinians were killed. A fresh wave of attacks killed at least another nine Israelis in the fall.

The Israeli army says most of the Palestinians killed have been militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed.

Israel says the raids are meant to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks. The Palestinians see them as further entrenchment of Israel's 55-year, open-ended occupation of the West Bank.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war and the Palestinians seek those territories for a future state.

Science & Technology

Best of CES 2023: Electric skates, pet tech and AI for birds

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Tech companies of all sizes are showing off their latest products at CES, formerly known as the Consumer Electronics show. The show is getting back to normal after going completely virtual in 2021 and seeing a significant drop in 2022 attendance because of the pandemic. Exhibitors range from big names including Sony and LG to tiny startups. You might see the next big thing or something that will never make it past the prototype stage. On Tuesday night, the show kicked off with media previews from just some of the 3,000 companies signed up to attend. CES officially opens Thursday. Here are some highlights:

1. POKEMON, BUT MAKE IT BIRDS

Bird Buddy showed off a smart bird feeder that takes snapshots of feathered friends as they fly in to eat some treats. The startup says its AI technology can recognize more than 1,000 species of birds, allowing users to share through a mobile app what kind of birds they're feeding.

"We try to kind of gamify the collection so it's a really fun game that you can play—almost like a real life Pokémon Go with real animals and wildlife in your backyard," said Kyle Buzzard, the company's



AP
An exhibitor holds up the Bird Buddy smart camera bird feeder during CES Unveiled before the start of the CES tech show, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023, in Las Vegas.

co-founder and chief hardware officer.

The product has already sparked some interest from consumers who want to show the world what birds are coming into their backyards.

The company, which began as a Kickstarter project in 2020, says it started shipping its bird feeders in September and has already sold all 100,000 in its inventory. The price for the basic feeder is \$199.

2. ELECTRIC SKATES

Journalists had fun zipping around the exhibit hall on remote-controlled, electric inline skates from French startup AtmosGear.

The battery lasts for 20 miles (32 kilometers), said founder Mohamed Soliman, who hopes people will see them as a viable way to commute, like electric bikes or scooters.

"My goal is for everyone to go skating again because it's so much fun, every time you see people skating you see them with a big smile," Soliman said.

A waist bag holds the battery and cables connected to the skates. They also can be used as regular skates when they need to be charged or skaters simply want to travel under their own power.

The \$500 skates are available for pre-order. The company has taken orders for 150 pairs so



AP
Mohamed Soliman of Atmos Gear shows off the Atmos Gear inline electric skates during CES Unveiled before the start of the CES tech show, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023, in Las Vegas.

far and is aiming for 200 orders to start production.

3. DIGITAL TEMPORARY TATTOOS

A handheld device displayed by South Korean company Prinker allows you to quickly and easily apply temporary tattoos.

The device uses cosmetic-grade ink with a library of thousands of designs or the option to make your own with the company's app. After picking a tattoo, you just wave the device over wherever you want it applied. The tattoos are waterproof but wash off with soap.

The flagship model is \$279 and a smaller model is \$229.



AP
An exhibitor applies a temporary tattoo with a Prinker digital temporary tattoo device during CES Unveiled before the start of the CES tech show, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023, in Las Vegas. The device allows the user to print a temporary tattoo in cosmetic ink.

Ink cartridges good for 1,000 tattoos are \$119.

4. HELPING FIND YOUR WAY

Japan-based Loovic has created a device designed to solve the challenges of those who have difficulty navigating while they walk.

The device worn around the neck employs sounds and vibrations to guide users to destinations, enabling them to look at what's around

rather than focusing on a phone's map app.

Loovic co-founder and CEO Toru Yamanaka said he was inspired to create the device for his son, who has a cognitive impairment making it difficult for him to navigate.

The prototype device is not yet available to the public.



AP
Exhibitor Toru Yamanaka wears a Loovic augmented reality device during CES Unveiled before the start of the CES tech show, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023, in Las Vegas. The IoT device, worn around the neck, uses tactile notifications and bone conduction audio to help guide the user without having to constantly look at a map app on their phone.

6. METAVERSE FOR KIDS

The creators of Roybi, an educational AI robot that helps children learn about STEM topics and new languages, are venturing into the metaverse.

The RoybiVerse is expected to offer stations where K-12 and higher education students can learn about a wide range of education-

al topics.

Users walking around the RoybiVerse will be able to visit an area where they'll learn about dinosaurs or walk over to the virtual library where they can pick a book and read it.

The RoybiVerse, which is expected to launch by mid-2023, will be available in virtual reality headsets and on a website. No robot needed.

5. A FITNESS TRACKER FOR YOUR DOG

If you wonder what your dog is doing while you're not home, French startup Invoxia has a product for you. The company's smart dog collar monitors your pet's activity and sleep, sending the data to your phone.

The latest version unveiled at CES, which has a GPS tracker, includes more advanced heart health monitoring.

The collar is \$149 in the U.S. while a monthly \$8.25 subscription to the app monitors the data and shares it with your veterinarian.

Looted ancient sarcophagus returned to Egypt from US

CAIRO (AP)—An ancient wooden sarcophagus that was featured at the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences was returned to Egypt after U.S. authorities determined it was looted years ago, Egyptian officials said Monday.

The repatriation is part of Egyptian government efforts to stop the trafficking of its stolen antiquities. In 2021, authorities in Cairo succeeded in getting 5,300 stolen artifacts returned to Egypt from across the world.

Mostafa Waziri, the top official at the Supreme Council of Antiquities, said the sarcophagus dates back to the Late Dynastic Period of ancient Egypt, an era that spanned the last

of the Pharaonic rulers from 664 B.C. until Alexander the Great's campaign in 332 B.C.

The sarcophagus, almost 3 meters (9.5 feet) tall with a brightly painted top surface, may have belonged to an ancient priest named Ankhenmaat, though some of the inscription on it has been erased, Waziri said.

It was symbolically handed over at a ceremony Monday in Cairo by Daniel Rubinstein, the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Egypt.

The handover came more than three months after the Manhattan District Attorney's Office determined the sarcophagus was looted from Abu Sir Necropolis, north of Cairo.

It was smuggled through Germany into the United States in 2008, according to Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg.

"This stunning coffin was trafficked by a well-organized network that has looted countless antiquities from the region," Bragg said at the time. "We are pleased that this object will be returned to Egypt, where it rightfully belongs."

Bragg said the same network had smuggled a gilded coffin out of Egypt that was featured at New York's Metropolitan Museum. Met bought the piece from a Paris art dealer in 2017 for about \$4 million. It was returned to Egypt in 2019.

Science Matters

Flailing infant is learning coordination

The apparently random movements of a newborn – waving arms, flexing legs – crucially help the infant learn to coordinate sensory nerves, motor nerves and muscles

A new Japanese study observed the motions and nerve activity of 12 healthy newborns (less than 10 days old) and 10 young infants (about 3 months old)

1 Cameras record body movements with the same "motion capture" technology used in animated CGI movie-making

2 Baby's muscle activity and nerve signal activity calculated using a whole-body, musculoskeletal computer model

Computer baby model

Plots arm and leg muscles combined with the motor nerves controlling them

Accounts also for **proprioception**, the nervous system's feedback mechanism that lets infant sense how it is moving

CONCLUSION: Spontaneous movements, with no apparent task or purpose, contribute to infant's development of muscle and nervous system coordination

Infant develops coordination not just by repeating the same action but by randomly exploring a variety of actions

© 2023 TNS
Source: Hoshinori Kanazawa of University of Tokyo; Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences (US)
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Off The Wall

Not just for kids: Toymakers aim more products at grown-ups

NEW YORK (AP)—Since the pandemic, Elizabeth Hulanick has turned to toys from her childhood to relieve stress.

She and her co-workers chip in to buy Legos at Target and play at their desks. She also started playing with Silly Putty again, noting she felt comforted by the bouncy rubbery stuff that changes colors.

Even her American Girl doll called Samantha, which she keeps in her china cabinet, resonates more these days; she waited one year for her mother to buy her that doll when she was a child and now, she says, it served as a reminder to always be patient.

“(This) probably will be with me forever. I always need something to be tinkering with, and that’s probably the safest bet for me to stick with a toy versus keep trying to figure out how to fix cars or something like that,” the 37-year-old Piscataway, New Jersey resident said.

Long before the pandemic, many adults turned to toys from Legos to collectible items to tap into their inner childhood for comfort. But all the stresses from the health crisis accelerated and solidi-

fied the trend, according to Jim Silver, editor-in-chief of TTPM, a toy review site.

And even as the pandemic’s threat ebbs, toy makers from Mattel’s American Girl to Build-a-Bear Workshop Inc. see adults’ interest in playthings as long-lasting and are creating new products, services and websites aimed for the older group.

This so-called “kid-adult” market is significant. Ages 18 and older represented 14% of U.S. toy industry sales, or \$5.7 billion for the 12 months ending September 2022. It grew 19% since the 12 months ending September 2021, according to the NPD Group Inc., a market research firm. This group also enjoyed the second-fastest increase after customers ages 12 to 17.

Starting early this year, Mattel’s American Girl Cafe added more adult fare like beet and goat cheese salads and cocktails like Aperol spritzes and Bloody Marys after seeing adults show up without children. Last year, Build-a-Bear launched a website called Bear Cave for the 18-year-old and over, highlighting items like stuffed rabbits holding a bottle



Jamie Cygielman, general manager and president at American Girl, poses behind a showcase of dolls during a press tour, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, in New York.

of wine. And Basic Fun took a high-tech spin on the traditional Lite Brite toy from the 1960s and recreated it as wall art with thousands of pegs and 45 LED lights aimed at the adults in time for the holidays—with a \$99 price tag.

Lego A/S has been steadily increasing its products for adults since 2020; it now has 100 sets, including intrepid space exploration and luxury cars.

“The pandemic certainly served as a catalyst for this trend as adults found them-

Florida sheriff: Burglars call 911 to get help moving stuff

POINCIANA, Fla. (AP)—Two people in Florida were arrested after one of them made a 911 call to get help with moving their belongings from a home they were burglarizing, authorities said.

Deputies responded to a home Saturday after a 911

call was made but nobody spoke, the Polk County Sheriff’s Office said. At the home, the deputies concluded that nobody lived there, but they found a male suspect and his girlfriend inside the home after entering it through an unlocked door.

Deputies had been searching for the male suspect after identifying him from security video as a burglar at a Dollar General store in Poinciana, Florida, where several items were stolen earlier in the day, the sheriff’s office said in a statement. Poinciana is about 35 miles (55 kilometers) south of Orlando.

While talking to deputies, the female suspect told them that she had called 911 for the purpose of having law enforcement help them move

evieve Cruz, senior director at Lego, which sees adults of all ages embracing the colorful building blocks. “But we do believe that the trend goes beyond the pandemic.”

Executives say what makes this time different is that consumers are really getting into the role-playing. Build-a-Bear says adults are actually taking their stuffed animals to bed. At American Girl, women get dressed up in outfits inspired by their favorite dolls and are bringing their dolls from their childhood to the cafes and sitting with them, said Jaime Cygielman, general manager and president at American Girl. They’re also bringing them to the doll hospital or the hair salon at the stores to have them repaired or have their hair coiffed, she noted.

their belongings from the house they were burglarizing. They also wanted to get a ride to the airport so they could spend the weekend in New York, the sheriff’s office said.

“Deputies DID help them with their belongings, and DID give them a ride, but it wasn’t to the airport ... it was to the Polk Pokey,” the sheriff’s office said in a Facebook post. “And they are welcome to stay there all weekend long. The Polk Pokey is much better than New York anyway.”

The male suspect was charged with burglary and theft related to the store and also burglary of a residence. The female suspect was charged with burglary of a residence, according to the sheriff’s office.

No cash, no bank heists in Denmark because its criminals now go online

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—For the first time in years, Denmark hasn’t recorded a single bank robbery. There wouldn’t have been much point.

Cash transactions in the Nordic country have become virtually obsolete, with Danes increasingly opting to use cards and smart phones for payments.

The Danish bank employees’ union on Tuesday welcomed the news that 2022 had been robbery-free.

“It is just amazing. Because (robberies) put an absolutely extreme strain on the affected employees every time (they) happened,” spokesman Steen Lund Olsen said in a statement.

Finance Denmark, the banking sector’s association, said only about 20 bank branches

across the country have cash holdings. But then the number of bank branches has fallen from 219 in 1991 to 56 in 2021, it said.

News reports noted that cash withdrawals in Denmark have been dropping by about three-quarters every year for the past six years.

In 2000, 221 bank robberies were recorded, Finance Denmark said. In 2021, there was just one.

Initially, robbers switched their attentions from bank branches to Automatic Teller Machines, with such attacks peaking at 18 in 2016. But those too have come down to zero amid better surveillance and technical protection, the industry association said.

Finance Denmark said criminals in recent years have turned to defrauding people online.



IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

†Chelsey Frances Manibusan Reyes

“Lovingly known as Princess, Chels, Che, Teti Bear”

Born on February 04, 1999 was called to her eternal rest on January 01, 2023 at the age of 23.

Her Beautiful Soul and Precious Heart will forever be with:

Her Parents: Nick Joseph and Mary Michelle M. Reyes

Her Siblings:
Frannie Lee Jade Manibusan/
Ricardo Jr. Delacruz
Amber Nicole M. Reyes/Colby Ogo
Niko Kane M. Reyes
Napu Uniku M. Reyes

Reared Siblings:
Edward Luis A. Deleon Guerrero
(Edward Jr./Angelina)

God Siblings:
Joseph T. Reyes
Roman Franklin M. Tudela
Colvin R. Sablan
Chance B. Reyes

GrandParents:
Jose A. Reyes/Soledad(Darlene) Duenas (Kapira)
†Francisca Masga Reyes
†Francisco B./Nelda M. Manibusan
†Dolores Masga Agulto
†Vicente/Primitiva DLG. Torres

God Parents:

Roman Jr./Aristona M. Tudela
Nick R./Susana P. Sonoda

Paternal Aunts & Uncles:

†Dennis M. Reyes & Children
Doreen R./Juan Sablan & Children
†Verna M. Reyes/John(Kristy)
Lizama & Children
Jovene R./Patrick Ogo & Children
Germaine R./Peter Crisostomo & Children
Jesse/Gina Dela Cruz & Child
Anthony/Redie Dela Cruz & Children
Maynard D./Nicole B. Reyes & Children
Jolene Duenas/Vincent Quitugua & Children

Chelsey will be dearly missed by numerous Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Nephews, Nieces and friends.

Daily Mass of Intention is being offered at San Vicente Ferrer Parish at 6:00pm (Monday, Wednesday, & Friday), 6:00am (Tuesday & Thursday), 5:30pm on Saturday, and 9:00am on Sunday. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, January 14, 2023. Our Beloved †Chelsey will be escorted from Borja Funeral Home to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 7:45 a.m. followed by Responso service, Rosary, viewing, and last respects. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. followed by interment services at the Santuario Pax Memorial Garden in Kagman where our Beloved †Chelsey will be laid to rest.

John U./Coreen C. Palacios
Jesse M./Jocelyn M. Tudela

Maternal Aunts & Uncles:

Aristona M./Roman Jr. Tudela & Children
Amelia M./Ralston Ogo & Children
Jocelyn M./Jesse M. Tudela & Child
Ding M./Jason Abe & Children
Laureen M./Vincent Deleon Guerrero & Children
Francisco Jr. M./Tearsha W. Manibusan & Children

YOUR LOVE, THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

**NICK JOSEPH AND MARY MICHELLE M. REYES,
CHILDREN & FAMILY**

Life & Style

Iran releases Oscar-winning film actress held over protests

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Iran released a prominent actress from an Oscar-winning film on Wednesday, nearly three weeks after she was jailed for criticizing a crackdown on anti-government protests, local reports said.

Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency said Taraneh Ali-dooosti, the 38-year-old star of Asghar Farhadi's Oscar-winning 2016 film, "The Salesman," was released on bail. Her mother, Nadere Hakimelahi, had earlier said she would be released in a post on Instagram.

After her release from the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran on Wednesday, Alidoosti posed with bunches of flowers, surrounded by friends. No further details have been released about her case.

Alidoosti was among several Iranian celebrities to express



Iranian prominent actress Taraneh Alidoosti, center, holds bunches of flowers as she poses for a photo among her friends after being released from Evin prison in Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023. AP

support for the nationwide protests and criticize the authorities' violent clampdown on dissent. She had posted at least three messages in support of the protests on Instagram before her ac-

count was disabled.

One message had expressed solidarity with the first man to be executed on charges linked to the protests, which were triggered by the death of a woman

in police custody and have escalated into widespread calls for the overthrow of Iran's ruling clerics.

The protests mark one of the biggest challenges to the Is-

lamic Republic since it was established after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Security forces have used live ammunition, bird shot, tear gas and batons to disperse protesters, according to rights groups.

Mohsen Shekari was executed Dec. 9 after being charged by an Iranian court with blocking a street in Tehran and attacking a member of the country's security forces with a machete. A week later, Iran executed a second prisoner, Majidreza Rahnavard, by public hanging. He had been accused of stabbing two members of the paramilitary Basij militia, which is leading the crackdown.

Activists say at least a dozen people have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings over charges linked to the protests.

"His name was Mohsen Shekari," Alidoosti wrote on an account with some 8 million followers before her arrest. "Every international organization who is watching this bloodshed and

not taking action, is a disgrace to humanity."

The Iranian reports on Alidoosti's release did not say whether she has been charged with anything or if she will stand trial. It was also unclear whether she faces travel restrictions as part of the terms of her release.

At least 516 protesters have been killed and over 19,000 people have been arrested, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that has closely monitored the unrest. Iranian authorities have not provided an official count of those killed or detained.

Hengameh Ghaziani and Kattayoun Riahi, two other famous Iranian actresses, were arrested in November for expressing solidarity with protesters on social media. Voria Ghafouri, an Iranian soccer star, was also arrested that month for "insulting the national soccer team and propagandizing against the government." All three have been released.

The protests began in mid-September, when 22-year-old Mahsa Amini died after being arrested by Iran's morality police for allegedly violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code. Women have played a leading role in the protests, with many publicly stripping off the compulsory Islamic headscarf, known as the hijab.

The protesters say they are fed up after decades of political and social repression. One of the main slogans has been "Death to the dictator," referring to Iran's 83-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has held the country's highest office for more than three decades.

Another woman files sex abuse lawsuit against Cosby, NBC

By **DAVE COLLINS**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A woman who alleges Bill Cosby drugged and sexually assaulted her in 1986 sued the comedian-actor, NBCUniversal and other companies Friday in New York, where five other women filed a similar lawsuit earlier this month.

Stacey Pinkerton says she was a 21-year-old flight attendant and model that year when she claims Cosby drugged her at a restaurant in Illinois and took her back to a hotel room in Chicago. The lawsuit alleges Cosby "engaged in forced sexual intercourse" with her while she was incapacitated from the drugs.

The lawsuit comes more than a year after Cosby left prison after his 2018 sexual assault

conviction in Pennsylvania was overturned. Earlier this year, a Los Angeles jury awarded \$500,000 to a woman who said Cosby sexually abused her at the Playboy Mansion when she was a teenager in 1975.

Pinkerton says the alleged assault came after she had met Cosby in New York and he promised to help her career. She says she had a role in an episode of "The Cosby Show" on NBC, but did not appear in the final edit.

Months after the alleged assault, Pinkerton said Cosby invited her to his show at a Chicago theater, where she claims he forcefully kissed and touched her.

"Cosby engaged in the same or similar pattern of conduct

with his victims," Pinkerton's lawsuit says, "including expressing interest in advancing their careers, giving them roles on The Cosby Show, using The Cosby Show and its filming locations as a means to access, isolate, sexually harass, and sexually assault women, using drugs to incapacitate his victims, and forcibly engaging in sexual acts with them without their consent."

The lawsuit alleges that NBC, Kaufman Astoria Studios and Carsey-Werner Television should have known Cosby was a danger to women and failed to protect Pinkerton from him.

Cosby spokesperson Andrew Wyatt said Friday night that Cosby "continues to vehemently deny all allegations waged

against him and looks forward to defending himself in court."

"As we have always stated, and now America can see, this isn't about justice for victims of alleged sexual assault, it's ALL ABOUT MONEY," Wyatt wrote in an email to The Associated Press. "We believe that the courts, as well as the court of public opinion, will follow the rules of law and relieve Mr. Cosby of these alleged accusations."

Representatives of NBCUniversal, Kaufman Astoria Studios and Carsey-Werner Television did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday night. All three companies were involved in the production of "The Cosby Show," Pinkerton's lawsuit said.

Marriage teeters months after vows are exchanged

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married 11 months. We've been together five years and have lived together for the last three. This is my second marriage and his third. I have put up with a lot from him and overlooked way too much. He isn't affectionate, doesn't kiss me hello or goodbye unless I ask, and doesn't hug me.

He doesn't seem to like sex either, although if I say it, he gets mad at me and says he does. We might have sex twice a month. I would like it more often than that, but I have tolerated his almost nonexistent sex drive. He never initiates. He is very moody and pouts and complains about things not going his way with his job, his life, his 16-year-old daughter (who doesn't like to be with him), etc. Yet he doesn't make positive changes.

Since the wedding, he has stopped sleeping with me in the same bed. He claims I snore and it wakes him up. I don't like the TV on when I'm falling asleep, and he demands to have it on. He won't go with me to visit my family but demands that I go with him on weekends and sometimes during the week to have dinner at his parents'.

I moved an hour and a half away from my children and grandchildren to be with him. When I mention that I would like to have the kids spend the night, he comes up with a million excuses why that isn't a good idea, but when his daughter wants to spend the night, it's perfectly fine.

OMG, as I write this, I'm wondering WHY am I with him? I

feel like crying. I do love him, and when I think about not being with him, it feels like my heart is falling out of my chest. What should I do?

HEARTBROKEN & STUCK IN THE EAST

DEAR HEARTBROKEN: I know what I would do if I were in your situation, but I'm not you. You stated that you gained insight from writing this letter. You appear to be an intelligent person. I suggest you reread your letter several more times, because after you do, I am confident you will know what you need to do. It is possible to love someone and not be compatible.

■■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am in my 40s and have been divorced for seven years after an awful marriage. I have two daughters who would love for me to meet someone and have the loving relationship I deserve. The problem is, I fell in love with someone after my divorce, and he decided to marry someone else. I have no way of knowing if he is still married. We are not allowed to have contact because of his new wife's jealousy.

My heart is broken. I don't know how to move on from someone I truly felt was my soul mate. How do you tell your heart to move on? It feels impossible. No one compares to him, so I feel like my only option is to settle for less than the best or stay single.

DOWNHEARTED IN OHIO

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR DOWNHEARTED: Either of those options MIGHT work for you. But a better one would be to realize that while this man may have been YOUR soul mate, you were not HIS. Then make a rational decision to move forward with your life. You are in your 40s, and it isn't too late to meet someone with whom you can have a happy life.

■■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

FILE NOT FOUND

Bulls end Nets' winning streak at 12 with 121-112 victory



CHICAGO (AP)—DeMar DeRozan and Patrick Williams each scored 22 points, and the Chicago Bulls stopped Brooklyn's 12-game winning streak with a 121-112 victory over Kevin Durant and the Nets on Wednesday night.

Durant scored 44 points, but Chicago had six players score in double figures. Nikola Vucevic had 21 points and 13 rebounds, and Ayo Dosunmu finished with 17 points. The Bulls had dropped two in a row.

Durant rested at the beginning of the fourth quarter and Chicago put together an 8-0 run. Dosunmu stole a pass at midcourt and went in for the jam for a 106-95 lead with 6:46 left. Williams and DeRozan each hit two foul shots in the final minute to help close it out.

Durant scored a season-high 28 points in the first half, but Brooklyn trailed 69-59 at the break. He went 15 for 22 from the field for the game, finishing one point shy of his season high against Orlando on Nov. 28.

Kyrie Irving scored 25 points for Brooklyn.

Pistons 122, Warriors 119

In San Francisco, Saddiq Bey hit a 3-pointer as time expired after Golden State's Klay Thompson tied it with a 3 with 2.3 seconds left, sending Detroit Pistons past the Warriors.

Detroit ended the defending champions' season-best winning streak at five. Reigning NBA Finals MVP Stephen Curry missed his 10th straight game with a partially dislocated left shoulder and is set to be re-examined Saturday at the two-week mark from his last evaluation.

Bey made another key 3 late and wound up with 17 points, Bojan Bogdanovic hit his first five 3-pointers and one with 3:42 left on the way to 29 points to lead six Pistons in double figures.

Thompson missed his first six 3-point tries then hit two big ones down the stretch on the way to 30 points. Draymond Green was ejected with 1:24 to play for his second technical of the game.

76ers 129, Pacers 126, OT

In Philadelphia, De'Anthony Melton hit a go-ahead 3-pointer late in overtime and James Harden scored 26 points to help Philadelphia team playing without Joel Embiid beat Indiana. Melton put the Sixers ahead 125-124 with 2:16 left in OT. He finished with 19 points.

Montrezl Harrell followed with a rim-rattling dunk, and the 76ers held on for their 11th straight home victory. Harrell



Chicago Bulls' Zach LaVine (8) shoots over Brooklyn Nets' Kevin Durant (7) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023, in Chicago.

also had 19 points on 8-for-9 shooting.

Embiid, who had been playing with a sore lower back, sat out with a sore left foot. Embiid hurt his foot in Monday night in a win over New Orleans.

Buddy Hield led Indiana with 24 points.

Bucks 104, Raptors 101, OT

In Toronto, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points, 10 assists and a season-high 21 rebounds for his second triple-double of the season. Grayson Allen hit a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 11.6 seconds to go in overtime and Milwaukee beat Toronto.

Antetokounmpo, who scored a career-high 55 points Tuesday night against Washington, came in having at least 40 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in each of his past three games. The two-time MVP shot 7 for 18 against Toronto, making 1 of 3 from 3-point range and 15 for 21 at the free throw line.

Allen scored 16 points, Bobby Portis Jr. had 14 points and 12 rebounds and Pat Connaughton scored 15 points for the Bucks. They won for the third time in four games since losing a season-high four straight.

Fred VanVleet had 28 points and 12 assists for Toronto.

Lakers 112, Heat 109

In Los Angeles, Dennis Schröder scored 14 of his season-high 32 points in the fourth quarter and undermanned Los Angeles improbably overcame LeBron James' absence to beat Miami.

Russell Westbrook had 21 points, nine assists and eight rebounds for the Lakers, who rallied from a six-point deficit in the fourth quarter and held off Miami without their top

three scorers. James stayed home with a cold, while Anthony Davis and Lonnie Walker were injured.

Thomas Bryant added 21 points and nine rebounds, while Schröder was brilliant down the stretch. The German point guard's 9-for-9 performance at the free throw line in the fourth quarter sealed the Lakers' fourth victory in five games.

Bam Adebayo had 30 points and 13 rebounds, and Jimmy Butler had 27 before missing a 3-pointer at the buzzer for the Heat.

Cavaliers 90, Suns 88

In Cleveland, Evan Mobley's 14-foot jumper with four seconds left — off an assist from Donovan Mitchell — helped Cleveland send Phoenix to its fourth straight loss.

Mitchell finished with just 20 points two nights after scoring 71. But on Cleveland's final possession, he drove and fed Mobley, who calmly knocked down his shot in his return after missing two games with a sore ankle.

The Suns had a chance to

tie it, but Mikal Bridges missed a jumper in the final second. Mitchell snared the rebound and fired the ball to the other end in celebration.

Caris LeVert scored 21 points to lead the Cavs.

Chris Paul scored 25 points and Deandre Ayton added 15 points and 18 rebounds for Phoenix, which went just 1-5 on a trip and dropped to 4-12 since Dec. 5. The Suns have struggled without injured All-NBA guard Devin Booker, out with a groin strain.

Pelicans 119, Rockets 108

In New Orleans, CJ McCollum scored 28 points and short-handed New Orleans opened up a 31-point lead and beat Houston.

Jonas Valanciunas had 16 points and 17 rebounds for New Orleans. The Pelicans snapped a two-game skid in their first game since learning star power forward Zion Williamson would be sidelined about three weeks by a strained right hamstring.

Jabari Smith Jr. had 14 points and 13 rebounds, and Eric Gor-

don added 13 points for the Rockets. They dropped their fifth straight game and lost for the 10th time in 11 contests.

Grizzlies 131, Hornets 107

In Charlotte, N.C., Ja Morant had 23 points and eight assists, Desmond Bane added 19 points and 10 rebounds and Memphis beat Charlotte for its fourth straight victory.

Dillon Brooks scored 18 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. added 17 points and nine rebounds for the Grizzlies. Steven Adams had 15 rebounds.

LaMelo Ball had 23 points and 12 assists for Charlotte. The Hornets have lost 14 of 17 games.

Magic 126, Thunder 115

In Orlando, Fla., Paolo Banchero had 25 points, eight rebounds and seven assists and Orlando beat Oklahoma to end a three-game losing streak.

Gary Harris and Terrence Ross each scored 18 points for the Magic, playing without four suspended players because of an altercation in a

game at Detroit.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 33 points for Oklahoma City.

Knicks 117, Spurs 114

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored a career-high 38 points, Julius Randle had 25 points and 13 rebounds and New York beat San Antonio.

Brunson added seven rebounds and six assists for the Knicks, who won their third straight since a 122-115 loss in San Antonio last Thursday. Brunson missed that game during a three-game absence with a sore right hip, but returned with 24 points in a victory over Phoenix on Monday and made the big plays late in this one to surpass his previous regular-season best of 34 points.

Keldon Johnson scored 26 points for San Antonio.

Timberwolves 113, Trail Blazers 106

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards scored 13 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter, Rudy Gobert had 17 points and 12 rebounds and Minnesota beat Portland.

Luka Garza added 14 points off the bench for Minnesota, which saw another halftime lead slip away in the third quarter but held on for its second straight victory after a six-game skid.

Damian Lillard scored 27 points for Portland. Jerami Grant scored 20 of his 26 points in the first half.

Hawks 120, Kings 117

In Sacramento, Calif., De'Andre Hunter and John Collins each scored 22 points, and Atlanta beat Sacramento to stop a four-game slide.

Collins also grabbed 12 rebounds as Atlanta bounced back after losing 143-141 in double overtime at Golden State on Monday night. Trae Young and Dejounte Murray each scored 21 points.

De'Aaron Fox led Sacramento with 25 points.

NBA says Mitchell's desperation score shouldn't have counted

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Donovan Mitchell sent the best game of his career to overtime with an incredible play.

A little too incredible, the NBA said.

Mitchell's desperation basket that forced overtime — off an intentionally missed free throw — and extended what became his 71-point effort for the Cleveland Cavaliers in their 145-134 victory over the Chicago Bulls shouldn't have counted, the NBA said Tuesday.

The reason: Mitchell stepped "over the plane of

the free throw line before the ball touches the basket ring," the league said in its publicly released report that assesses calls made by officials in the last two minutes of the fourth quarter and overtime of games that were within three points or less.

Players who are shooting a free throw cannot go over the foul line until the ball reaches the basket cylinder. It's a violation, the shot would not have counted, and Chicago should have been given possession with 4.7 seconds remaining and the Bulls leading 130-128.

Bulls coach Billy Donovan knew Monday night that it was a violation, and predicted the league's Last Two Minute Report would prove him right. The league has used the reports for years as a form of accountability and transparency, but outcomes of games are not changed by the discovery of a missed call after the fact.

"It doesn't do anything," Donovan said. "It's like, 'We're sorry.' ... That's unfortunate, because I thought our guys battled and competed."

Mitchell intentionally missed the free throw because

Cleveland was trailing by two points. He shot the ball perfectly off the back of the rim as he intended, went into a crowd of players to grab the rebound, and scored with 3 seconds left to tie the game.

That basket gave him 58 points, breaking Cleveland's single-game record of 57 that was held by former Cavaliers stars LeBron James and Kyrie Irving, and wound up forcing the overtime.

Mitchell scored 13 more points in overtime. The 71 points are the most in the NBA since Kobe Bryant had 81 on Jan. 22, 2006.

NFL still considering scheduling options, Week 18 unchanged

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The NFL is still considering various options following the suspension of the Bills-Bengals game, including possibly eliminating the bye week before the Super Bowl.

The Bills-Patriots game set for Sunday in Buffalo and the rest of the Week 18 games remain on schedule.

The pivotal Bills-Bengals game was suspended Monday night after Buffalo safety Damar Hamlin collapsed and went into cardiac arrest while making a tackle in the first quarter.

Hamlin's recovery is moving in "a positive direction," two days after the 24-year-old player had to be resuscitated on the field, his marketing representative said Wednesday.

The league hasn't had discussions about postponing the Bills-Patriots game, which has playoff implications. The AFC East champion Bills (12-3) are vying for the No. 1 seed. The Patriots (8-8) would clinch a wild-card berth with a win.

"Frankly, my concern is to make sure the men have what they need to function, and that's getting through this day. Tomorrow is going to take care of itself," league executive Troy Vincent said in a conference call. "So, from my communications with the club and those players, it's just strictly been around making sure they're OK to check in, and being able to access those resources that are available to them. It is tough. And Coach is still battling."



Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin (3) lies on the turf after making a tackle on Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Tee Higgins, blocked from view, as Buffalo Bills linebacker Tremaine Edmunds (49) assists at the end of the play during the first half of an NFL football game between the Cincinnati Bengals and the Buffalo Bills, Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, in Cincinnati.

The Bills were scheduled to hold team meetings and a walkthrough practice without any media availability on Wednesday. They are expected to resume practice on Thursday. The Patriots returned to practice Wednesday but pushed back their media availability to Thursday.

"It's really important that we just keep the pulse of the coach and the players, and don't get in front of that," an emotional Vincent said. "And we'll allow (Bills coach) Sean (McDermott) and his team and his staff and the players, which are the most important thing here, to guide us if we have to make that decision

collectively with the club and what's best for Sean and his team and the players."

NFL executive Jeff Miller said a decision on whether to resume the Bills-Bengals game at a later date will be made in the coming days. The outcome of the game impacts the AFC playoff structure because the Bills entered Monday night as the No. 1 seed.

"There's a lot of considerations in place there and a lot of people that we want to consult with, including the clubs involved, before that decision is final," Miller said.

The Bengals (11-4) have a one-game lead over Balti-

more in the AFC North and also are in the mix for the top seed. The Kansas City Chiefs (13-3) surpassed the Bills for the No. 1 seed, pending the result of Buffalo's game against Cincinnati.

The NFL will lean on some of its guiding principles from the 2020 season when COVID-19 impacted the schedule and contingencies were in place in case every game wasn't played. The league wound up playing all 256 games in 17 weeks despite the pandemic.

The playoffs are scheduled to begin Jan. 14. Pushing the start back one week to complete the Bills-Bengals

game is among the options. That would eliminate the bye week between the conference championship games on Jan. 29 and the Super Bowl on Feb. 12.

Other scenarios include playing the Bills-Bengals game and the NFC wild-card games on the same weekend and pushing the start of the AFC playoffs back one week. That also would eliminate the bye week before the Super Bowl.

The Pro Bowl Games featuring various skills competitions in Las Vegas are scheduled for the week before the Super Bowl, with a flag football game between the

AFC-NFC teams on Feb. 5. That week could be pushed to after the Super Bowl or be canceled.

Not resuming the Bills-Bengals game would be the simplest option from a scheduling standpoint because it wouldn't require any other changes. The No. 1 seed and other playoff positions would then be determined by winning percentage. In that case, the Chiefs would have the inside track on securing a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

"Those guiding principles that got us through or took us into the 2020 season with COVID, all of those things will be things that guide us through this conversation and making sure that proper equity is in place," Vincent said. "As we saw, potentially, there may be a lack of equity where it may not be perfect, but it will allow those that are participating or have earned that right to play, to continue to play."

The Chiefs play the Las Vegas Raiders on Saturday in the first game of this week-end's slate.

"We know whatever scenario we have to go play to try to win the football game," said Chiefs coach Andy Reid, who coached the Philadelphia Eagles in a preseason game in 2012 just four days after his 29-year-old son died. "That's what we have to do. That's what we're going to do. And the players have worked through practice and done a nice job with it up to this point."

CINCINNATI (AP)—Team-mates and other NFL players offered their support Wednesday for Cincinnati Bengals receiver Tee Higgins, saying he did nothing wrong on the play that caused Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin to go into cardiac arrest.

The 24-year-old Hamlin's heart stopped after tackling Higgins in a horrifying scene that led to the suspension of Monday night's game. Higgins led with his right shoulder, which hit the defensive back in the chest. Hamlin then wrapped his arms around Higgins' shoulders and helmet to drag him down. The play appeared routine but Hamlin got to his feet then collapsed backward.

Medical personnel were able to restart his heart on the field. Hamlin remains in intensive care at a Cincinnati hospital. His condition has improved slightly, the team said.

"There's nothing you can do about that hit," quarterback Joe Burrow said Wednesday after the Bengals practiced for

Players around NFL say Hamlin's injury wasn't Higgins' fault



Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Tee Higgins (85) runs near Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin (3) during the first half of an NFL football game, Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, in Cincinnati.

the first time since the incident. "That hit happens on every play of every single game. That's the scary part about it."

Dallas Cowboys linebacker Micah Parsons pushed back at

former NFL player Bart Scott, who suggested on ESPN that Higgins was partially at fault for lowering his head and "throwing his body" into Hamlin's chest after catching a 13-

yard pass.

"(A)re we serious?!? why do we let some people speak on tv?!", Parsons tweeted in response to Scott's comments. "This was a freak incident but

putting fault on another player is wild!"

Bengals receiver Tyler Boyd was more direct, tweeting in response to Scott: "straight bozo."

Bengals defensive tackle D.J. Reader said Hamlin and Higgins were simply "out there playing at full speed."

"It's just what happens sometimes, and it's just such a freak accident," Reader said. "You can't take your foot off the gas as a defender or an offensive player out there. If you're playing lightly, you're going to take your risk of getting hurt. It's the only way to play this game. You got to play 100 miles an hour, and that's how you go about it."

Chicago Bears center Sam Mustipher said extreme violence is part of the deal for NFL players.

"Football is a game where you want to impose your will on another man," Mustipher said. "And I'm sure you know (Higgins) thought, 'I'm lowering my shoulder, knocking it

forward, finishing a run after a catch.' And that happens. You know, I hope his mental is good, he's doing all right. You know, there is a lot of emotion and passion in this game. Yeah, I can't imagine what he is feeling right now."

Outside University of Cincinnati Medical Center, Hamlin family spokesman Jordon Rooney called for "rallying around like people like Tee Higgins. You know, like he needs support."

Burrow said Higgins, who wasn't made available to reporters Wednesday, is handling the situation as best he can.

"Tee's doing well. He's pretty shaken up, just like all of us," Burrow said. "We've never seen anything like that, and unfortunate as it is, that's part of the game and something that you hope never happens, but as we saw on Monday night, can and will happen."

Bengals coach Zac Taylor said only that "my communication with Higgins is that he's doing OK."

Run Saipan Trinity '23 race on Jan. 14, 15,

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Three races over three consecutive days. Do you have what it takes? For the first time, a trio of races aptly named Run Saipan Trinity '23 are set for Saturday, Jan. 14, Sunday, Jan. 15, and Monday, Jan. 16.

The Saturday race time starts at 6am; the Sunday race is in the afternoon at 4pm; and to close it off, the Monday race, which falls on a holiday—Martin Luther King Jr. Day—is at 6am.

Run Saipan is calling out

daring runners to take on the whole three days of races which will span the lengths of scenic routes on Saipan, with the first race called the Marpi 10K on Jan. 14; next is the Mt. Tapochao 5K Race on Jan. 15; then the Oleai Beach 5K on Jan. 16.

Runners can choose not to run on all race days and will re-



LEIGH GASES

Run Saipan Trinity '23 is set for Jan. 14, 15, and 16 in Marpi, Mt. Tapochao, and Beach Road for the first three-day race of its kind on Saipan.

ceive an event medal for each race joined and an event T-shirt.

However, a big commemoration medal will be given to those who complete all three races.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz said that this three-day run event is the brainchild of Dr. Ron Snyder.

"Dr. Ron wanted to do a three-day race like they do in Europe and this was how it was created. We decided to do it on a three-day weekend. Every race on our calendar has an intention. This race is intended for runners crazy enough to put their body through

its paces with a three-day back-to-back races. We didn't design it to be beginner-friendly. We wanted a race for people that want to test their limits. If you think you're tough then prove it by completing all three races."

The race that inspired Snyder is called the Isle of Man Easter Festival of Running in the British Isles, which is from April 7 to 9. It is now in its 59th edition.

Bib pickup for the Trinity race is from Jan. 9 to Jan. 13 at Saipan International School from 9am



to 2pm or at Cafe Mango Six on Jan. 13 from 6pm to 8pm.

Race price is \$30 and the refund policy is 50% until late registration. No refunds will be given during the late registration period.

For questions, contact Snyder at r.snyder@sissaipan.net.

Next up on a full year's calendar of races on Feb. 18 is the 3rd Annual Marianas Ekiden which is a 21-kilometer relay from Micro Beach in Garapan to just before Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio and back.

KOBLERVILLE

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with 53-48 remaining, before Atan's two free throws gave them some breathing room.

Naraja's two free throws made it a 5-point game again, but Tynk Basa's put-back restored a 57-50 advantage for Koblerville as the two-minute warning was announced.

Gualo Rai would then misfire on a bunch of hurried 3-pointers in the homestretch to kiss their aspirations of an undefeated elimination round and a No. 1 seed in the playoffs goodbye.

Atan led all scorers with 35 points, while Devin Igisomar and Basa added 11 and 10 markers, respectively.

Naraja paced Gualo Rai in the loss with 19 markers followed closely by the 18 of backcourt mate Aldan. Padayao added 12 points.

Despite finishing with iden-

tical 6-1 win-loss records, Koblerville took the top seed in the age group heading to the playoffs via the winner-over-the-other rule.

It will face 4-3 Dandan in the first round of the playoffs on Sunday, Jan. 8. Gualo Rai, meanwhile, will battle 5-2 Tanapag tomorrow, Jan. 7.

In other divisions, it will be Kagman (7-1) vs Oleai (3-5) and Tanapag (6-2) vs Finasisu (4-4) in the first round of the playoffs in the boys 13.

In the women's division, top seed Dandan (8-1) will square off against fourth seed Kagman (5-5), while second seed Garapan (6-4) will duel third seed San Vicente (5-5) in their own Final Four.

Before the epic Koblerville-Gualo Rai showdown, Dandan edged Navy Hill, 53-51, in the boys 18 thanks to key free throws by Aiden Suba and Kenny Laquian.

In the same age group earlier,

San Antonio mangled San Vicente, 67-19.

On Tuesday, Dandan beat San Antonio, 65-51, and Tanapag defeated Chalan Kiya, 75-60, in the boys 18; and San Vicente dropped Kagman, 46-33, and Garapan got by San Jose, 55-44, in the women's division.

Last Monday, Mikayla Lopez fired the last 6 points for Garapan to lead them to a 47-46 win over San Vicente in women's play.

Also in the same division, Dandan outplayed San Vicente in crunchtime, 33-29.

Koblerville, meanwhile, warmed up for its battle against Gualo Rai with a 107-13 drubbing of San Vicente in the boys 18.

Koblerville 61 – Atan 35, Igisomar 11, Basa 10, Omar 5.

Gualo Rai 53 – Naraja 19, Aldan 18, Padayao 12, Garcia 4.

Scoring by halves: 25-24, 61-53.

The recent Northern Marianas College graduate competed in the discus event of the 2022 Mini Games.

Santos won three gold medals in the quadrennial event when the 31-year-old Koblerville Elementary School special education teacher topped the snatch, clean and jerk, and overall competitions of the 55-kg class.

bagged him the gold medal in his weight class.

For his part, Andrew was caught by surprise making it to the Top 10 of the juniors +109 weight category.

"I'd say that this achievement is definitely surprising and I'd like to dedicate this achievement to my team and my coach Angel San Nicolas."

SIS tennis tourney returns

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The annual sports fundraiser for the Saipan International School's student council is returning as the 2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament will be served starting Jan. 14 at the American Memorial Park tennis court.

Junior netters will kick off hostilities with age group competition in the boys and girls 12, 14, and 16, mixed junior doubles in the 14 and 16, and mixed mini-tennis in the 10-and-under.

Adult tennis commences on Jan. 21 in the men's and women's singles 4.0 and open

and mixed doubles 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0.

Deadline for junior entries was yesterday, Jan. 5, while those for adult entries have until Jan. 8. Cutoff is at 3pm with no exception with a maximum of two events per weekend.

Entry fee is \$20 for singles, \$15 for doubles (per person), and \$10 for the mini-tennis.

For more information on the



Woo



2023 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament, call or text Serin (670) 788-7400 or

Jack (670) 989-0080.

The Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association is coordinating the tourney.

Last year, Jimin Woo and Hye Jin Elliot topped the men's and women's division, respectively, of the 2022 edition of the SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament.

Woo beat No. 2 seed Morris Villanueva in the finals, 6-2, 6-1; while Elliot defeated schoolmate Serin Chung, 6-4, 5-7, 10-4, in the championship match.

ARMY

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stretch to the Last Command Post in Marpi.

The U.S. Flag team consisted of team captain ST Atalig Aloysius, along with team members SPC Ricky Santiago, SPC Jimmy Demapan, PFC Mcrey Miranda, and PVT Earl Salamat.

Team CNMI Flag was upheld by team captain ST Charles Nicholas, SGT Francis Estrada, SGT Magic Cabrera, SGT Gerald Galang, and CPL Earl Benedicto.

While the 9th Mission Sup-

port Command Flag team included team captain SGT Sablan Kelly, SSG Terence Leung, SGT Robert Mojica, SGT Kevin Adams, and SPC Gelomenemiko Narciso.

As a unit, they reached the finish line with a time of 2:15.20.

Robert Mojica, who has been in the Army Reserves for 10 years and is a firefighter at the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, said that it was a good run. Though they could not put the flags down at any point and had to hold them at a certain angle while running, they all

managed to finish strong.

During the race, Mojica said that "once the team that was done running goes to the next waiting point, we'd rest, drink water, and then once the guys came to us, then we'd run again. So there were times where we'd have a break in the race."

He added, "good run everybody. We enjoyed it, it was a lot of fun... Some of the guys had their significant others come out, they were also supporting us and they were either driving vehicles and bringing us to our stations... Hopefully we get a bigger group to join us for the next race."

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Bulls end Nets' winning streak at 12 with 121-112 victory

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Run Saipan Trinity '23 race on Jan. 14, 15, 16

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Koblerville ends Gualo Rai's perfect run



MARK RABAGO

Devin Igisomar skies for a layup against Gualo Rai in the second half of their boys 18 division match in the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last Wednesday night at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Center.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Koblerville ended Gualo Rai's quest for perfection and in the process took the No. 1 seed in the boys 18 division of the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last Wednesday night at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Center.

Led by Ja Morant clone Airson Atan's 35 points, Koblerville extricated itself from a close first half by using a running attack in the homestretch to beat the erstwhile unscathed Gualo Rai squad, 61-53.

Both teams were evenly matched in the first half as you would expect from the Top 2 teams in the division with Koblerville eking out a candlestick 25-24 lead at intermission.

Koblerville, however, started

the second half with aplomb as it immediately dropped a 28-15 run against Gualo Rai to open up a 14-point spread.

But Gualo Rai wouldn't go down without a fight as back-to-back triples by Leo Naraja and Lucio Aldan and a free throw

by the former cut down Koblerville's once-imposing lead to 53-46 time down to 5:28 in the match.

Craig Padayao's layup with 4:05 left made it even closer

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Grabs No. 1 seed in boys 18

Santos, Colisao, Andrew make Oceania Top 10

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Ray Santos, Joey Colisao, and Lyle Andrew made it to the 2022 Top 10 rankings of the Oceania Weightlifting Federation.

CNMI Weightlifting president John Davis said Santos is represented in two weight categories.

He is ranked No. 2 in the seniors 55 kg with a best total of 207 kg. He is also No. 9 in the 61-kg weight category with a total of 205 kg.

Colisao is No. 1 in the juniors +109 weight category with a total of 275 kg. Andrews is ranked No. 5 in the same group with a total of 136 kg.

"Congratulations to the CNMI weightlifters that made the Top 10 ranking for Oceania in their respective senior and junior weight categories.

Little by little, step by step CNMI weightlifting will make a serious impact in the Marianas, Oceania, and the Pacific. Maybe not today...but someday. Thank you for everyone's support," said Davis.

Colisao said making it to No. 1 in his weight category for the entire Oceania region was a dream come true.

"I've worked hard to get to this point and I won't be stopping, I'm aiming to climb the ranks even more and give it

my all. I'm sure my younger self would be ecstatic about this and I am proud that I've come this far. I still have a lot to learn and achieve but this is one big step toward an ultimate goal," the 20-year-old said.

Colisao dedicated his accomplishment to his family, friends, teammates, coaches, and to himself.

"They all helped me grow as a person and an athlete. I

See **SANTOS** on **Page 23**



LEIGH GASES/MARK RABAGO

Joey Colisao, left, and Ray Santos in action during the weightlifting competition of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Army Reserves joins Christmas Relay race



LAO ZHANG

The U.S. Army Reserves unit is seen crossing the finish line with the CNMI, U.S., and 9th Mission Support Command flags after they ran the 13.7-mile 41st Christmas Island Relay for the first time from the Pacific Islands Club Saipan to the Last Command Post last Dec. 24.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



It is no easy feat to run a race, especially while carrying something the length of it without putting it down.

Members of the U.S. Army Reserve of the 9th Mission Support Command did just that when they ran through the entire Northern Marianas Athletics 41st Christmas Island Relay

course carrying the weight of the flags of the U.S., the CNMI, and the 9th Mission Support Command last Dec. 24.

It was the first time that an Army Reserves unit has ever joined the relay race.

In a collaborative effort, the 302nd and 100th Battalion banded together from the starting line at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan and ran 1-mile increments each while carrying their designated flags, all the way through the 13.7-mile

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